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THE VIRGIN'S SON

By

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Author of The Living Atonement

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child,
and shall bring forth a son, and
they shall call his name Immanuel”

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826 North La Salle Street

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TO
EMMA DUNBAR CHAMPION
AND
OUR SEVEN BAIRNS



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P R E F A C E

IN my spare moments, midst the hurried days of a pastor's life, this book has come together. Some of its defects, because of this, will be apparent enough without pointing them out. It is not made up of sermons or lectures, except the four chapters on the Virgin Birth, the substance of which was presented a few years ago to the New York Baptist Ministers' Conference. None of its material has been before this heard or read. Of course, in different form, many of its thoughts have been preached to my congregation. There are few if any bi-mental preachers with one mind for authorship, and another for the pulpit.

To those who may care to peruse its pages, this contribution to the solution of the most serious situation in the history of the Church, is respectfully submitted. For the sake of brevity it reflects very little of the large amount of literature assailing, or defending, the authority of the Scriptures, the Virgin Birth, and the Deity of Christ. While it is not a book of reference and reflection of theological literature, I hope that it will prove reflection of another kind, with real help for those who will receive it.

My thanks are due to Professor Brainard H. Woodward of White Plains, New York, for his kind assistance in proofreading.

J. B. C.

THE VIRGIN'S SON

CHAPTER I

THE SITUATION

TODAY we are in the midst of a great theological upheaval, more disturbing than an earthquake.

Many Modernists are diligently stirring up the gift that is within them of shaking the structure of conservative Christian faith and of shocking the faithful within it. Daring denials of the Virgin Birth, and of other supernatural facts of Christianity, are being broadcast repeatedly. Evidently some believe that unbelief if stated startlingly is a satisfactory substitute for faith itself. As long as the widest publicity is being given to this determined assault upon the "things which are most surely believed among us," it has become necessary to publish abroad our defense of the Gospel to reassure those whose faith has been troubled by this steady eruption of unbelief.

I

Before this is attempted, there is first a brief message which should be passed on to those abnormally serene in the midst of all these alarms. No doubt this is due to being cocained by indifference to the issue. There is the danger that they may lose permanently the sense of its seriousness. This would be as bad as joining the ranks of the enemy.

Let us beware of belittling the seriousness of the situation which today confronts the Church of God. Grant a man that it does not matter to you that he is battering down the vestibule of your place of worship; when he has finished that, he will be in a mood

to disregard what further you may grant or think. Your indifference has given him a foothold for further work of destruction; and he is more than likely to make use of his opportunity, for his advantage is your disadvantage.

The Virgin Birth might be called historically the vestibule doctrine of Christianity. Many are now unwisely saying that since it is not an essential doctrine, its destruction makes no difference. If we accept for the moment their estimate of this doctrine it would not follow that its destruction does not matter. Of course, a vestibule is not essential to a place of worship, but not much worship is likely to go on while the tearing down of the vestibule is in progress. To stop the demolition is surely essential. If we are unable to arrest the destruction of the vestibule, how are we going to prevent the destruction of the main building, especially when the attack has come from within?

In such a situation of struggle, apathetic indifference is less defensible than the attack of the enemy. True, civil war is always more damaging and deadly than any other kind. Then there is all the more reason for not being indifferent to it. He that is not with faith in the Virgin Birth is against it, and he that is against it is not for faith in the reliability of the Scriptures.

Silent truth is no match for outspoken error. In this "hour and power of darkness" the silence of friends is more betraying than the kiss of the betrayer. That is the only "argument of silence" that amounts to anything. Even now it is a very late hour for the slumbering members of the Church to awaken to what is going on. Without question there never was a time in the history of the Church when there was within it so much unblushing contradiction of the Word of God in its teachings about the origin and nature of the Person of Christ.

The assault upon the Virgin Birth narratives of the Bible is really an assault upon the supernatural nature of Christ's Person, which is nothing less than a denial of His Deity. Natural causes can produce but natural results. A supernatural person cannot have his origin through natural causes—through human parents. Then the question really is, whether Christ was wholly a natural, or both a natural and supernatural, person. Lose the Supernatural out of His personality, and all the Supernatural elsewhere in Christianity is then of no account.

The natural never can beget the Supernatural. It is either the Miraculous Conception, or no supernatural Person as Saviour. Either the Virgin Birth stands, or Christ's Deity goes. And with His Virgin Birth and Deity gone, with them go the Trinity and all the soul-saving power and passion of evangelical Christianity.

II

Suffer another word of arousement. Let us beware of greatly grieving the Holy Spirit by falling in with the critical attitude and destructive spirit so prevalent today in pulpit, professor's chair, and almost everywhere. If the Scriptures had long been a source of injury to the human race, if down through the ages they had been darkening men's minds, dragging downward their lives, and impeding their efforts to serve God, one could see some reason for not recognizing Holy Writ as the work of the Spirit of God.

When we assume that we are called of God to claim the superiority of our own inspiration by the Holy Spirit over that of the Holy Scriptures, we fall by this pride from the heavenly heights of communion with the Spirit of God. The hallmark of the Holy Spirit's inspiration is humility, not swaggering conceit. A deadly danger lurks in the supposition of superior inspiration, in being "wise above that which

is written" at the behest and under the manifest influence of the same Spirit.

For some time another spirit than that of reverence toward the Word of God has been manifest. The very air has seemed to carry it. Its infectious infatuation has exhaled its influence into the minds of men, producing an exaggerated self-confidence which feels itself sufficient to smite the faces of the Scripture writers, buffet them for their supposed faults, and show up their imagined ignorance. Some of our Christian teachers have a penchant for sowing in the minds of their students distrust of the Scriptures. The following incident is an example, and is typical of what frequently occurs. Thank God, it does not always so happen on similar professorial excursions.

A doctor in philosophy with his degree from one of the great universities, a member of an evangelical church near the college in which he taught, went one day out of his way, in class, to remark that Paul was deficient in logic when he attempted to prove the fact of the Resurrection from an analogy, namely, that of a grain of wheat dying and rising again. A student remonstrated that Paul was not there to defend himself. Had Paul the chance he could have shown that he had proved the fact of the Resurrection by the great number of competent witnesses who saw the Risen Lord. Then, as he plainly said, Paul had turned to another phase of his subject—the method of the Resurrection: "But some will say, how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" Here it was that Paul quite properly used his analogy.

Matthew and Luke are not here to defend themselves when charged with fabricating the story of the Virgin Birth, and Mary herself is not here to defend her good name and honor. But the Holy Spirit is here, to be grieved, if we cast doubt upon the reliabil-

ity of His work, to be pleased if we use the capacity He gives to recognize His message of enlightenment.

III

Such is the situation. The dykes are down, and the floods are rushing in. Belief in the Virgin Birth has for many given way, and with it faith in the reliability of the Scriptures on matters of paramount importance. Representative men in the church and numbers of lesser lights are flashing signals of defiance in the darkness, which is deepening.

A chasm deep as death has opened up right in the very midst of every evangelical denomination. This is no exaggeration of false alarm. With the situation such that the church is divided against itself and apostasy seemingly at a premium, "what shall the righteous do" who have been the defenders of the Christian faith? What they must! What else can they conscientiously do than continue to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints," "the faith which is in Christ Jesus," and to "be watchful and establish the weak things that remain, that are ready to die"? It is a choice between doing this and having "a name to live, and be dead."

What does it matter that many Christians are abandoning belief in the Virgin Birth? Much every way. No one loses faith in it alone. As with sin, so is it with unbelief, especially the unbelief which kills credence in the answer of Holy Writ to the question, who Jesus Christ is, and whence He came. Such unbelief has a progeny as prolific as that of iniquity. No one denies God's Word at one point, and stops there, even as no one sins once, and stops there.

"Who is it knocks so loud?

A little lonely sin.

Slip through, we answer;

And all hell is in."

With unwearying repetition it is being said that the Miraculous Conception is not a cardinal doctrine of Christianity, and the loss of it matters little. But the same power which takes it away is also taking away the cardinal doctrines as well. The same fire that burns up even an unimportant room in a house is surely able to do as much for the other rooms also.

When gangrene has attacked one's little finger, or when blood-poisoning has infected a little toe, what has the relative unimportance of these members to do with the danger? Cannot a man die and be as long dead from necrosis or septicemia beginning in finger or toe, as in chest or head? The necrosis of unbelief is no respecter of doctrines, big or small, important or unimportant. This subtle enemy is always wily enough to begin at ever so humble a point where we are foolish enough to let him.

IV

The fort of Biblical Inspiration is surrendered to the enemy, as far as that man is concerned when he ceases to trust the Scriptures on the paternity of his Lord. If the Bible cannot be trusted to tell us whose Son is the hope of the world's salvation, then who is to tell us where it is to be trusted? If Holy Writ be rejected at this strategic point, one is surely free to distrust it at any other point. And he is more than likely to do so.

The usual course is that loss of faith in the Virgin Birth is followed by a modified belief in Christ's Deity, refusal to believe in his personal pre-existence, and the Sabellian view of one person in the Godhead, with three manifestations. An attenuated view of the Atonement follows. So down through the whole list of the Christian teachings spreads the effect of that which began with the Virgin Birth. Any doctrines not bodily thrown out on the scrap-heap are

held with very much less grasp of assurance and conviction.

From the attitude a man takes to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, you can pretty well calculate his valuation of other doctrines. For example, perhaps not more than once in a hundred cases would you find a rejector of it believing in the personal, visible return of our Lord. From his acceptance or his rejection of the Miraculous Conception the rest of a man's theology can be pretty accurately diagnosed. So the Virgin Birth is a diagnostic doctrine, a symptomatic subject.

One wonders whether its assailants really believe that this doctrine is so very unimportant after all! How do they explain the long train of results which flow from the rejection of it, if this be true? And why has all the might of the forces of Modernism been gathered against it? If it is really so unessential and unimportant, is not their effort like that of the mountain which labored to bring forth a mouse? Perhaps this is the kind of birth Modernists do believe in!

V

What is the situation for Jesus Christ? Is His paternity a matter of importance to Him? To what kind of man is it not? At the close of the day called the Day of Temptations, during his Passion Week, when His enemies were all the more bent on His death, because at every point raised against Him they had suffered defeat, He issued this final challenge: "What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?" Quoting from the one-hundred-and-tenth Psalm, He continued, "If David then called him Lord, how is He His son?" To this the only reasonable answer is the Virgin Birth. Through His mother He was David's son, and through the Miraculous Conception David's Lord.

What is the situation today from the Jewish point

of view? From the first the Hebrew nation has as stoutly refused belief in the Virgin Birth as in Christ's Deity. When the High Priest put Jesus on oath in His trial as to whether He was the Son of God in the unique sense, the reply of our Lord was very like the common expression one hears on the street today, "You've said it." Forthwith they condemned Him to death as a blasphemer.

Had Jesus taken the Modernist stand, He need not have died on the Cross. Modernism has the same unbelief which the Jews had when they put to death the Lord of glory. All Jews today who still deny the Miraculous Conception are glad of the large accession to their view from the ranks of the Christian church. Modernism is not of very great help in this way to bring the Hebrew people to accept Jesus as their Messiah. Who can blame the Jews for rejoicing over the large number of professed Christians returning to their ground of rejecting the paternity-claims of Christ after nearly twenty centuries? How long will it take, in this way, to win them as Paul and others were won?

Is not the situation today one of threatened impoverishment of Christian thought? If richness of revelation should decide for us between the Modernist and the Scriptural views, there is little doubt which would have the decision in its favor. In the Modernist view God gains a son when Jesus was born. In the Christian view God gives a Son He had already, and who to express the Father's love lays down, in infinite sacrifice, His heavenly powers and prerogatives too great for the limitations of a human life, that "we through his poverty might be made rich."

One does not wish to be unduly severe with the barren denials due to theological brain-storms. That this could be mistaken for richness of interest in academic truth, is pathetic. Let every man judge for

himself whether the view he takes enriches or impoverishes his devotion to, and appreciation of, his Lord and Master, whose appreciation of us and devotion to our needs is still running on with the speed of God, that defies measurement.

With love for the Church without bigotry, with zeal for the truth without the zealot's narrow sympathy, let us in our discussion of it hate his error without in the least hating the man holding it or held by it.

"Not Thine the bigot's partial plea,
Nor Thine the zealot's ban;
Thou well canst spare a love of Thee
Which ends in hate of man."

CHAPTER II

THE WORD OF GOD

ONE outstanding feature of the religious situation today is the changed estimate of and regard for the Bible. Its inspiration and authority mean far less than they did a generation ago. This is bound to affect most seriously our estimate of and regard for Jesus Christ Himself, for Holy Writ is the only gallery in which His portrait hangs. It alone contains the picture of His Person, the revelation of His Redemption, the soul and goal of His Gospel. The situation today within the Church shows more clearly than ever that unless the Scriptures are regarded as the Word of God, the Saviour they proclaim is not likely to be regarded as the Son of God in the sense of God the Son.

One of the main reasons for this change of attitude toward the Bible is the naturalistic spirit and movement which dominates present-day thought. This movement has carried the period on to a position which obscures the Supernatural. Men are compelled to view the Scriptures and all else from where they are, and this is an age not disposed to believe in the miraculous. It prefers naturalistic evolution to divine creation, as an explanation of the genesis of man. Richer by far in inventions that tap material forces and resources than all the preceding ages, this age has a strong tendency to Materialism. Naturalism and Materialism go hand in hand, like sin and death.

I

From one point of view the situation ever remains the same. The facts which are the *criteria* of the Christian faith remain the same. Today it is not so

much a question of their reality, as of the right attitude toward them which can apprehend this reality. This depends upon two things—capacity and affinity. Being spiritual facts they are spiritually discerned, even as musical things are musically discerned, by musical talent. And kinship with the Spirit is necessary to a right attitude to the things of the Spirit.

Regeneration is the birth of the ability to behold spiritual things. "Except a man be born again (anew, or from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God." Except the color-blind get new eyesight, they cannot behold the painter's masterpiece. The hope of deciding that the masterpiece is such, is to keep out the judgment of the color-blind. So the hope of agreement in spiritual things is in seeing that we must reject the judgment of those not born of the Spirit of God. But one more thing also is needed for this agreement, namely, that this capacity *created by* be used of the Holy Spirit.

It is one thing to be regenerated, and another for us to use regeneration's capacity, and still another that the Holy Spirit use this capacity. Christians have other capacity than that born of the Spirit of God, and there are other spirits than the Spirit of God. Holy Writ warns us to "prove the spirits." Christians do not always exercise regenerated capacity, and sometimes are unconsciously led by a spirit opposing God, led by a spirit of lead that sinks them down in darkness. When men would call down the fire of destructive criticism upon the Scriptures, as the disciples wished to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, they "know not what manner of spirit they are of."

Unless the regenerated are under the control of the Spirit who begat them, they may separate into opposing camps, and come to opposite conclusions about very important spiritual things—the inspiration of the Bible, for example. One sees that the

story of the Virgin Birth has been given to us by revelation of the Holy Spirit. Another who also may be regenerated, denies this, and sees Matthew's and Luke's narratives to be but myth. This difference of judgment is as pronounced about many other subjects of Revelation. As a rule those who do not recognize God in the Word of God, do not recognize God in God the Son.

The Holy Spirit does not endow and lead one man to assert that a Biblical narrative is the truth of God, and endow and lead another man to deny this. The Spirit-born and Spirit-led cannot be found contradicting the revelation of that Masterpiece in books—the Scriptures. If two persons are using the similar capacity alike produced in them by the Holy Spirit, are seeking in prayer to be filled and led by Him, how can they take opposite attitudes toward any work of the Holy Spirit? If they disagree, it is because they have used means or faculties that disagree. Only contrary causes have contrary effects. By using contrary capacities, or else by being used, usually unconsciously, by contrary spirits, Christians may come to contrary conclusions.

Argument can but deepen disagreement between such. What then is the solution of this serious difficulty? Prayer, which really submits to the indwelling and asks for the leading of the Holy Spirit. One touch of the Holy Spirit's inspiration explains vastly more than all the strokes of strife; for there is more power in a touch than in a blow, especially when it is the touch of the Spirit of God.

By inspiration it is given to know the mysteries of inspiration. A clergyman owed his conversion to his mother and was greatly blessed by her life of sacrifice. He was prevented from being at her funeral. A year and a half later he came to her grave under the eaves of the little country church where she had heard her last sermon preached by him.

Feeling unutterably lonely he threw himself down beside her grave. Immediately he was spoken to: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" Startled, he looked around, but no one was in sight. Then he realized that these words had been thrust into his mind without an audible word being spoken. He was not only comforted, but taught more about inspiration than he had ever learned in theological seminary or by theological books. God has His short-cut, direct access into human minds by inspiration no less reliable than by the more roundabout and clumsy way of audible words. When we pray, "Inspire me, O God, to hear Thee speak in Thy Word," we find not less but more reliability than ever in the Bible.

II

Between these three—capacity, spirit, and thought—there is complementary correspondence. This psychological trinity explains the possibility of religious unity. We unite, not so much in the thoughts we have, as in the thoughts which have us. Every moral idea has its own counterpart in moral capacity and spirit. We may have the idea of courage or of patriotism without the accompanying spirit of courage or patriotism. There is the spirit of Naturalism and its counterpart thought. When its spirit grips our souls, then its thoughts have us, and we unite in defending it and publishing them.

There is no use in arguing against a spirit. Ideas alone never overcome spirit. And we cannot overcome a weaker idea by a stronger one, if the weaker idea is supported by its own spirit. If an idea is supported by its spirit, you must overcome its spirit before you are able to overcome it. It takes the Supernatural Spirit to overcome the Naturalistic. Unless the Holy Spirit is enabled to intervene, through those on both sides receiving Him fully, the argument be-

tween Naturalism and Supernaturalism may go on uselessly forever.

In religious revivals it is the birth of capacity and the impartation of spirit which changes men, for the acceptance of religious ideas alone leaves a person with but an intellectual deposit, alas, destined soon to be lost. Ideas cannot fructify in character without the help of their own spirit, for spirit is the mother, nurse, and protector of ideas. In such a world of conflict as this, ideas without their mother-spirit have much the same chance of surviving that babes would have on a battlefield. The Holy Spirit is the mother-Spirit of Christianity. Even Christian thought in a Christian soul without the mothering of the Holy Spirit will die for want of nourishment, or be trampled to death on life's battlefield.

Naturalism has had, and is still having, a great revival, and has converted many. Its main evangelists are our material possessions. The reciprocal tendency ever is to be possessed by that which we possess. In our own day increased control over the forces and resources of nature has awakened and strengthened faith in them, making men very self-sufficient, and drawing them away from faith in the Supernatural; so that finally they lose touch with it, capacity for it, affinity with it, and thought about it. The greater our store of riches in the material world, the less are we inclined to feel the need of and to have faith in the imperishable wealth of the spiritual.

What are all our modern inventions but new and improved means of controlling the forces of Nature, and of enriching ourselves thereby? Today the poorest man has the use of that which the richest man in bygone years could never have at any price. But what does it profit a man to gain the whole natural world, if in the process he loses his own soul? And invariably and unavoidably a man does lose his soul when he loses the Supernatural, for by it he was

made, and for it; and it alone can give him real power of possession, and redeem him from the slavery of being possessed by material things, instead of really possessing them.

God is, of course, a Supernatural Being. He is that or nothing. He cannot be God and at the same time be identical with Nature, nor can Nature be identical with Him. *When all is God there is no God.* When all of God is thought of as pent up in Nature and never transcending it, there is neither God nor Nature. We cannot lose the Creator, the Uncreated Beyond, without losing the Supernatural, the real God. Nature cannot take the place of God, nor fill it. *It is His servant, not His substitute.* He has waited a long time before trusting the human race with the material world's greater resources, lest they turn away man's heart from Him and the far greater and more enduring riches of the spiritual world. Shall we fail Him most, just when He has trusted us most?

III

The Bible could not be the message of God without sharing His Supernatural character. Evil has always recognized this. The Bible has always had to bear the brunt of sin's blind battle with God. Back in Eden the Word of God was the first thing assailed.

Sinful human nature invariably seeks to discredit that which rebukes it. If it can discredit the Scriptures as the Word inspired of God, and class them as mere human thought, their rebukes and warnings need not be taken so seriously. Then Dives may eat, drink, and be merry, not realizing that tomorrow he dies, and hell awaits him. Then Lazarus will live in a world where dogs are kinder than men.

The divine authority of the Bible stands or falls with its inspiration. A college professor employed to teach the Scriptures said to his students, "The inspiration of the Bible is simply a question of its truth,

of its accuracy; for a Biblical statement cannot be more than true, and God is the Author of all truth." And to show how little the Bible is thus inspired this teacher spent much of his time pointing out, and jesting about, the mistakes, contradictions, and discrepancies he found therein.

To bounce into the Holy of Holies with a joke, to wound the body of Holy Writ and laugh at the scar, is an exhibition not exactly befitting a Christian college. "He jests at scars that never felt a wound." How often it happens that he that is most open to criticism is himself most critical—and where least it fits. Had this man turned as critical eyes upon himself, he could have seen the wrong of taking money under false pretense. For years simple-minded people had provided his salary, misled by his profession of loyalty to the Bible. There is a deep significance in the lessening of transparency of motive, the diminishing of straightforward manliness, the lowering of sense of honor, and the weakening of healthy hate of deception that usually accompanies descent to a low view of the Bible and its inspiration. As a rule the defection of Rationalism gives up the loaves and fishes of conservative faith only when compelled to. Seldom has it had sheer honesty manly enough to surrender them voluntarily.

IV

Is it true that a statement can be no more than true? Are truth and inspiration precisely the same? Let us see. My little daughter comes to me with the request, "Five dollars, please."

"Who says so?" she is challenged.

"I do."

"Then you cannot have it."

"But Mother wants it."

"Ah, that makes a difference. Then it is Mother who says it."

"Yes, but I said it too."

This little lass had to learn that her uninspired word was deficient in financial power. Her statement, "I say it," was true; but truth is not the same thing as inspiration. One might be truly inspired by the Father of lies to lie. *Inspiration is the authority or appeal of another person than the speaker.* It enables one to speak for, or in the name of, another. The multiplication table is true but not inspired. The Bible might be all perfectly true and yet not a bit inspired. It would not then have God back of it as its Author, and it would lack therefore the appeal of His personality and power. It would be man's word, not His.

What, then, is meant by the inspiration of the Scriptures? Is it not *the part which God had in producing them, the share He took in their writing?* Inspiration is that which makes them His message. God breathed into the minds of the writers of Scripture his own thought, and it became a living message, even as he breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Without such inspiration by the Holy Spirit the Bible would not be the book of God. It would be as dead as the body of man without the soul. Then it would be like "Hamlet with Hamlet left out."

The inspiration of the Scriptures is not just a matter of truth or accuracy of statement, but of Divine authorship. As the mother spoke through her little daughter, so God speaks through chosen men. In so speaking the mother used the intelligence and knowledge of her little messenger. So God used the intelligence and knowledge of his spokesmen.

While supernatural in the substance of its message, the Bible must use the modes of thought of those who bring its message and of those to whom it is sent. On the natural side a divine revelation or

any other is interpreted and understood with the help of that already in the mind receiving it.

There may be certain misconceptions in human minds which do not interfere with understanding the message itself. For example, the Bible does not attempt to correct the wrong views of astronomy which men have held, but rather passes over them, since they do not interfere with understanding the substance of its message. But correcting these astronomical misconceptions would very much interfere with its real communication.

If the Bible had set out to teach correct natural science, it would have defeated its great purpose to get men right with God, not with geology and astronomy. It was not the want of scientific knowledge which caused man to go astray; and furnishing it would not bring sinners back to God; rather it would hinder by diverting their attention to non-relevant matters.

To hold that the Bible is untrue and uninspired because it does not correct wrong views of geology and astronomy, is unfairly to deny it a fundamental necessity of all revelation, namely *adaptation*. The Bible has no views on natural science as such. It tells us, as some one has said, "Not how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven." It declares to us, not how the strata lie in the earth, but how not to live a lie in our life on earth.

Holy Writ meets, not our lesser need of scientific information, but the infinitely greater need of spiritual knowledge. The Scriptures reveal to us in storied form and varied manner "the will of the Lord concerning us," the divine desires "to usward," how "God came in the flesh," how a sinless life was lived on earth, how Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection became man's redemption, how He who ascended to the Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe on Him, what is the mission of the Kingdom of God

on earth till the King returns—and many other such things.

No one can be saved without God speaking to him, for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” And no one can live without this Word, for “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” The exceeding great and precious promises of the Bible are worth to us infinitely more than all scientific knowledge, for when God promises he means what he says, while we are continually revising our natural knowledge. My fellow countryman, the late A. B. Simpson, in not very great poetry but very true faith, expressed his confidence in the Word in these lines:

“It is strange we trust each other,
And only doubt the Lord.
We take the word of mortals,
And yet distrust His Word;
But oh, what a light of glory
Would shine o’er all our days,
If we always would remember
God means just what He says.”

V

There is one thing to which the thought of God cannot ever be adapted, and that is to *unbelief*. The adaptation to other things that makes the Bible intelligible to faith, makes it assailable to unbelief. If in the mind to which its supernatural revelation comes, there is unbelief in the Supernatural, its revelation will be misunderstood and opposed.

As God is not God to unbelief in Him, so His Supernatural Word is not such to unbelief in the Supernatural; and its inspiration is but human delusion and suspension of natural law to the Naturalist. Naturalism is sure to object that the miracles and all such special, extra-natural activities are unnatural

and anti-natural. The fact is the divine and Supernatural is always pro-natural. It is this unbelief itself which is unnatural. There is a very profound reason why the anti-supernatural must be anti-natural as well.

God who made Nature should never be thought of as unnatural in anything or anywhere. His other works cannot ever contradict His Word; and His inspired Word cannot contradict Nature. What it does contradict is the unnatural in Nature—sin, doubt, unrighteousness. In Bishop Brooks' sermon on "The Manliness of Christ," he speaks of the Son's incarnate life as showing "a certain supernatural naturalness." Primordial or original naturalness would have been better. Be that as it may, nothing belonging to Nature is contrary to the Supernatural, for it produced Nature. Nothing that God ever did was more pro-natural than the miraculous sending of the Living Word and the Written Word. Both of these are profoundly pro-human. God is for us as no one else can be; and His Word is for us as is no other word. Would to God that we were equally for Him and His Word! Then our lives would be inspired and inspiring, somewhat as the Bible is. Coleridge said: "I know the Bible is inspired because it inspires me." This is the high purpose and end of inspiration. In Coleridge it did its work.

Since the Bible is a message from the Supernatural to set man right in his relation to the Supernatural that made him, we should look for its reliability—often called infallibility—in this realm, the realm of man's relation to God. This is one great thing God seeks to set right, namely, our relation to Him, which is the basis of all our relations elsewhere. If we can be saved to right relation to God, it matters very little what passing misconceptions we may have about many natural things which do not affect our devotion to Him. Omnis-

science is not necessary to communion with Omniscience.

Better be wrong about the age of earth's strata and right with God, than be right about the strata and wrong with God. Astronomical accuracy about the heavens will never get us into heaven. The Psalmist was not seeking after accuracy about stellar space but his hymns of devotion to the God who made the stars, have never been rivaled. Those who now know ten thousand times more about "this majestic roof, fretted with golden fire," are not writing such songs of praise to God as we find in the Psalms. Young souls starve for "the sincere milk of the Word," not for the latest lecture on the Milky Way.

Because it is the Word of God, the Bible as a whole is reliable in what it reveals as to the character of God, His desires toward us, the way of salvation, the person and mission of Christ, the Kingdom of God, the Christian life, the coming of the King, and the life to come. This is the high realm where infallibility has the highest value. To lead the Christian life, to have the Christian hope, and to finish the Christian task are possible when we hear the clear "thus saith the Lord," "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

"Word of the ever-living God,
Will of His glorious Son—
Without Thee, how could earth be trod,
Or heaven itself be won?"

Note:—Modernism in attacking the Protestant Reformation for setting up an infallible Bible in place of papal infallibility, is guilty of a glaring anachronism. Luther lived from 1483 to 1546. Papal infallibility was promulgated in 1870.)

CHAPTER III

BIBLICAL CRITICISM

THE second of the main causes which account for the decreasing regard for the Bible is the inadequate method now in general use when critically studying it. Besides this there is the destructive method. To learn what the Scriptures mean and to teach this, is one thing; to go after them with the sharp stick of destructive criticism, with all its unfriendly methods and attitude, is quite another.

In one of our smaller colleges where all the students were required to take the course catalogued as the study of the Bible, the professor in charge plunged the students at once into "The Documentary Theory of the Pentateuch." In this way he easily set them all "at sea," and had them completely at his mercy. The college constituency supposed that he was teaching the Bible, whereas he was really teaching the destructive criticism of it. This instance is mentioned because it is not by any means an isolated one.

In the far-off days our Lord said some would "compass heaven and earth to make one proselyte." Today, some teachers infatuated with Modernism, seem willing to take equal pains; and it usually happens that some of his pupils go further than the teacher, and drop all vital religious faith. It would be fairer to Modernists themselves, as well as to their students, if they were more candid in stating their aims. In the name of ordinary honesty, if a professor is going to teach destructive criticism, let him be frank enough to profess so, and not sail under the false colors of teaching the Bible.

The obvious defect of most Biblical criticism is this: *it is a one-sided study of a two-sided Book.* The Bible has both divine and human elements, and the human is but the vehicular part to carry to us its divine message. Now, modern Biblical criticism concerns itself with but the less important, the human element. Because as a one-sided study, it proceeds on this one-sided method, it is unbalanced and unbalancing; and not unfrequently it puts the student's feet in the air and his head in the mud.

Ask the teacher-critic why he ignores the supernatural element of Holy Writ, and he will tell you that the Bible must be treated precisely as any other book under critical study. But it is not as any other book, any more than Jesus Christ is as any other man. To treat it as any other book is to take it for what it is not. It is mistreatment to treat it as though it were what it is not. Mistreatment of divine truth is not the road to its verification. Starting with this false assumption, *the vindication of it at once becomes the main thing*, and not the impartial investigation of truth. How an anti-supernatural teacher can ever be an impartial critic of a supernatural book, it is for him to show—to those from Missouri.

Suppose we sought to find out what there is in Jesus Christ by treating Him precisely as we treat all other men. Then we would not pray to Him, nor ask Him to save us from sin, nor trust in His atoning death, nor look to Him to give us the Holy Spirit. He who claims supernatural power must be given supernatural scope in which to prove its possession. One cannot fairly decide that an ocean liner is unseaworthy because it will not float in his teacup.

Utterly inadequate is that order of criticism which imprisons a supernatural message within the restricted limits of Naturalism. This Book, whose message came down from God in heaven, if given no more scope than earth-born books, cannot be ex-

pected to prove itself heaven-born. The inadequate range of investigation in such a case determines beforehand what the conclusion must be. Then all we could prove by such criticism is that we were too unfair to give the Bible sufficient chance to vindicate its claims, and that we were not really investigating it at all, but by hook or by crook carrying out our determination to prove the assumption that it is as any other book. This procedure throws out of court its unique claim of divine authorship. It "throws out the baby with the bath," as the Germans say. But we must not mistake mere spleen for real criticism, for the sport of spleen is never to be pleased. As Cosgrave says, in the epilogue of "The Way of the World":

"There are some critics so with spleen diseased,
They scarcely come inclining to be pleased;
And sure he must have more than mortal skill
Who pleases one against his will."

II

A true, conscientious critic is an impartial investigator, not an inveterate apologist for some cause or theory. Finding that the Bible professes to be a message from God, he tests it by its effect on his relations with God, what it makes God to be to man, and man to God.

Intelligently to criticize a book on medicine, one must have the knowledge of a physician. To criticize intelligently the Book on the healing of the soul, one needs the knowledge of a spiritual physician. To criticize constructively this Text-book on divine worship, one must bring to it the attitude of worship. If it be objected that worship is not criticism, why not? What is criticism? Is it not seeking the truth? And cannot the truth be sought in a worshipful mien? Can he ever know what truth is, or seek it in any efficient way, who is a stranger to worship? How

can a rationalistic, anti-supernaturalistic disposition find out the truth of this Book, shot through, suffused with, and inspired by, supernaturalism? No one is qualified to be a helpful critic of the Bible who is ignorant of the art of spiritual healing, or who is not already a devout worshipper of God.

A faithful critic on examining the Bible finds *he needs its teachings far more than it needs his criticism*. The difficulty is not with the infallibility of the Bible, but with the assumed infallibility of the critics who do not understand it. The incompetence of the critic, not the incompetence of the Scriptures, makes the trouble.

One must devoutly desire to look into the heart of God to understand the Bible. No one has looked into the real meaning of the Bible who did not find he was looking into the very depths of the heart of God. The competent critic is the one who has the vision of the deep purpose of the love of God in Holy Writ. And this purpose was something more than to furnish a chopping-block for speculative critics. One is here reminded of the humorous lines:

“Thus some who have the stars survey’d,
Are ignorantly led
To think those glorious lamps were made
To light Tom Fool to bed.”

Each time the Bible is given a fair chance, it proves that it is far above all other books, and that God is the Author of it as of no other book. Then it is not criticism but miscriticism which examines the conveying element of the Word of God as though it were the substance conveyed. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels.” There is little wisdom in emptying out the heavenly treasure and spending all our time examining the earthen vessels in which it came.

That order of criticism is therefore defective and its conclusions valueless, if not dangerous, which ex-

amines a supernatural Book by a method which takes for granted that only the natural is involved. It is much as if we were to investigate the worth of prayer on the supposition that nothing more is involved than human effort; whereas it is laying hold on the desire of God to commune with and bless us. Prayer can be reasonably considered only by recognizing that it is a human activity involving the co-operating activity of God. An ounce of consideration which recognizes this is worth tons which do not. So an ounce of Biblical criticism which recognizes that God is speaking, is worth tons of tomes of speculative criticism based on the false assumption that only man is speaking.

III

The incomparable value of the Bible lies in its being the thought of God. The brand of Biblical criticism which assumes that the worth of Scripture lies in its being human thought, is as ineffectual as trying to bat a baseball with a toothpick. The reach of such criticism is utterly too short and weak for its subject, and its presupposition is utterly astray.

For the light of Scripture one should not mistake its human reflectors. No one verifies the presence of light, or finds out its nature by analyzing a reflector. Doing a similar thing with the Scriptures, this kind of critic finds darkness instead of light where light abounds.

There is another reason—and a profound one—why the Bible even in its human element cannot be understood when studied apart from its supernatural content. Granting for the moment that the Scriptures are in truth the Word of God, it follows that the mind of man is then a *secondary cause* in producing them. Now all secondary causes are an enigma without solution when considered apart from the First Cause. Reaching out to grasp their meaning, we feel after them rather than behold them, and groping in

the dark after them and chancing to touch them, they crumble into dust.

It is God in all things that gives them meaning. It is He who makes them intelligible. Because God is not in it, sin must ever remain the incomparable riddle, the unsolvable puzzle, "the mystery of iniquity." Just because there is so much more of God in it than in any other book, the Bible is bound to be more misunderstood than any other book, when considered apart from the part God had in its making. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." This intelligent, holy fear is faith's devout recognition and adoration of Jehovah. Such reverent fear is certainly necessary in Biblical criticism also, if the secret of the Word of the Lord is to be discerned.

The more of God in us, the more of Him we find in everything—except sin. If we are finding less of God in the Word of God than our forefathers found, the explanation is not to be sought in our superior insight. Psychologically considered, the less of God there is in the spirit, method, and aims of Biblical study, the less of God must it find in the Bible. Conversely, the more of God in those engaged in Biblical study, the more of Him they find in the Book of books. The Holy Spirit in man has no difficulty in finding the Holy Spirit's inspiration in the Scriptures. It has been long recognized that we must set like to find like.

"Yet to unfold thy hidden worth,
Thy mysteries to reveal,
That Spirit which first gave thee forth
Thy volume must unseal."

IV

The devout student will be humble, remembering, as Disraeli said, "It is much easier to be critical than to be correct." Critical conclusions, even when the

conditions are most favorable, are not absolutely trustworthy.

In one of our best theological seminaries, some years ago, the professor teaching "The Elements of Higher Criticism," on reaching the end of the paragraph on page four, decided that according to the principles of the Higher Criticism the word "contact" was a misprint for "contrast." For three days he argued with the class that this must be so. In the meantime two of the students had written the author, who very courteously replied to both that there was no misprint in this case, and that the word in the text-book was as he wrote it and meant it.

Here was a very careful professor, as conservative and constructive as he was devout, speaking the same language, laboring in the same calling, and living at the same time as his fellow-professor, deciding most positively that according to the principles of the Higher Criticism a thing was so, when it was not. What then about the conclusions of a destructive critic who has never overstrained his reverence for the Scriptures, who speaks another language than the languages of the Bible writers, is not in the same calling as they were, and is removed from them by some thousands of years? Following him may turn out to be somewhat similar in satisfaction to chasing a wild goose in a snowstorm. Perhaps it was the general unreliability of critics which caused Byron to say:

"As soon

Seek roses in December—ice in June,
Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff,
Believe a woman, or an epitaph,
Or any other thing that's false, before
You trust in critics."

This poet's estimate of woman's word the author does not share, but he has some slight leaning towards his view on critics. In a similar mood to that of

Byron some one has said: "There is probably no hell for authors in the next world—they suffer so much from critics and publishers in this."

The remedy for all the evils of criticism is not to stop all critical study of the Bible; but to stop assuming that its human element is all there is to it. Our feet must always be planted on the human when studying the divine; but we must get to the divine. Otherwise the light of criticism will but destroy our spiritual eyesight. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great (deep) is that darkness." Light can prove a curse as well as a blessing. As Hare says:

"Light will blind a man sooner than darkness. Are we then to pray that we may be left in darkness? O no! But beware ye who walk in light, lest your light be turned into a curse."

Ignoring the supernatural element in the Bible by exclusive attention to the natural in it, is like seeking light by putting out the light. In "Love's Labor Lost" the Peerless Poet mentions a similar thing:

"Light seeking light doth light of light beguile;
So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,
Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes."

That something has been gained by the critical study of the Bible, need not be denied; though its value has been greatly overestimated by some. That a great deal may be lost by it, is apparent. If its naturalistic conclusions as to who the Son of the Virgin is, destroy faith in His Deity, and in the reliability of Scriptures in portraying His person, the loss is very great, more than there can be any compensation for. Thank God, Biblical criticism is not all destructive, for some of it finds the Bible is the Book of Jesus Christ's paternity; and there is none other on this subject.

V

Critics too easily forget their own limitations. Sometimes what they berate in others, on occasions they themselves do. And sometimes in digging out the mote, they dig out the eye with it. A Modernist here in New York was dilligently adding darkness to night in the hope of light by insisting that the fundamental thing in Fundamentalism is its literalist interpretation of the Bible, despite the innumerable protests from Fundamentalists that this is not so. The Liberal scarcely knows what Conservatives believe better than they do themselves; but he should commend Liberalism by showing that it enables its followers to state their opponents' position correctly.

Having paid his respects to the Fundamentalists, this critic pointed out that the writer of Genesis was grossly ignorant because he represented the penalty of Eden on the serpent was that it should eat dust. So to make a point against the Bible, the critic himself became a literalist as slavish as he thought the Fundamentalists.

A man describing a fight between two beggars, said that it ended in a victory for the smaller man. As he put it: "The bigger beggar bit the dust." Suppose someone should insist that the meaning of this expression is, that the defeated man laid hold on the earth with his teeth. As a type of interpretation how different would this be from that of the critic of Genesis insisting that it means snakes literally eat dust for food?

What picture-loving, imaginative minds the writers of the Bible were! They were Eastern. The cold, matter-of-fact Western mind is not a good interpreter of their writings; and least of all the critic who takes from it a living figure, murders it, and then from its corpse draws his biggest argument against the inspiration of the Bible.

If blessed with any thing near a reasonable mood,

we must grant that critical acquaintance with anybody or anything is not the most valuable sort. It is very limited in its scope and trustworthiness. The uninspiring acquaintance of naturalistic criticism with Inspiration is like an icehouse study of perspiration.

There is an old saying that "familiarity breeds contempt." Mere critical familiarity is pretty certain to breed contempt even for that in no wise contemptible. The hero is never such to his valet, because the valet is nothing more. To the critic who is nothing but a critic, God's Word never seems such. His half-acquaintance with it is worse than none.

Better never to have seen the Bible at all, than do nothing more than sit in critical judgment upon it. It is far more fitting to let it sit in judgment upon us. Finally it shall whether we will or no. It would be better to think of the critical study of the Scriptures as a vestibule to pass through into the cathedral of divine acquaintance and communion. A mere critic is always a vestibule dweller, the modern counterpart to the cave-dweller, the up-to-date troglodyte.

Our forefathers took less time to pass through this vestibule of criticism. Just before his sudden death in Canada, Charles Silvester Horne said, in his Yale Lectures on Preaching:*

"Often when I study the preaching of the fathers, I am impressed by the fact that they knew their Bibles better than we do. They had less of the light of criticism; but they had I think, notwithstanding, a more exact knowledge of Holy Writ."

For many years the Bible has served the Kingdom of God and wrought a most mighty influence for good in the world. It has made men "wise unto salvation," built up Christian character, and has been "the

**The Romance of Preaching*, p. 216.

river which has made glad the city of our God." Having for ages this incomparable record among books, we need not fear that it is going to break down under the far lesser test of intellectual criticism. The bridge which has not given way under the traffic of heavy auto trucks, can be trusted to carry wheelbarrows over it in safety.

After all, the real test of Scripture is not to criticize it intellectually, but to live it whole-heartedly. The light of the Bible shines brightest and furthest when put to the highest use. This use is in the highest relation we bear—to God in Christ, and in the highest enterprise—that of extending Christ's Kingdom on earth.

He best defends the Bible who best presents its revelation of Jesus Christ. And he best presents the Christ who best portrays Him as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Only as we take the unlimited estimate of Him presented in the Word of God, can we hope to solve the Church's greatest problem of relating the divine power that is in Him to the helplessness of the world in the unrelaxing grasp of sin.

Let this word from the Great Apostle commending the Thessalonian Christians close this part of our discussion:

"For this also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

CHAPTER IV

STRATEGY AND PROPHECY

THERE is no more subtle strategy of Naturalism than that which has planned the assault on the truth of the Virgin Birth. There can be no more subtle way of minimizing who Jesus Christ is, than by minimizing the way He came into human life. De-supernaturalize the way He came, and you de-supernaturalize what He can do for us. De-supernaturalize the Incarnation, and infallibly you devitalize Redemption. The less we find in Jesus' paternity and person, the way He came, and the way He went, the less substance of saving power must we find in the Gospel.

I

For many years the great strategic center of the theological battle-field was the Resurrection of our Lord. Against it all the forces of Naturalism, Rationalism, and all other opposing isms were hurled in determined and deadly onset after onset. If it could be shown that Jesus Christ did not win in His battle with sin and death, the power of a supernatural Christianity (the only kind with the power of genuineness) to overcome its enemies would be shattered.

But the large number of unimpeachable witnesses to the fact of the Risen Christ and the irrefutable circumstantial evidence made attack upon His resurrection most difficult. It is generally admitted to be one of the very best attested facts of human history.

The enemy lost that great battle; but the war still goes on, and will until the Lord comes again.

The clever old Strategist who leads the opposing forces, whether they realize it or not, was shrewd enough to renew the assault where a similar abundance of witnesses could not be called upon. A miracle less public than the Resurrection would be more assailable. So it has come to pass that the line of attack has shifted almost wholly to the miracle of the Incarnation by the Virgin Birth. Today it forms the great strategic center of the battle-field like the little Farm House of Hougomont in the Battle of Waterloo, or like Verdun in the late Great War. At this meeting-point is the clash of all the forces in action in this irrepressible struggle of Naturalism with Supernaturalism.

At once the defenders of the Faith saw that here the struggle would be far more severe and more difficult for them. In the nature of the case only two persons, Mary and Joseph, could stand as witnesses in the Virgin Birth conflict; and these were at once subjected to the enemy's fire of moral accusation. In the rapture of the Holy Spirit during the pre-natal days Mary said: "Behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed." Today finds some of the professed followers of her Saviour-Son calling her instead an immoral woman. Besmirching His mother's name is scarcely following Him. No matter what regimentals soldiers wear, they are known by the side they fight on, or the weapons they use.

Not in a controversial spirit with its war of words, and love of strife, but in loyalty to the vital truth assailed, and in defense of the womanly purity called of God to exceedingly holy service, must we stand fast against the enemy. Let no one think that the conflict is almost over. The vast extension of recruiting grounds for the foe in schools and colleges, and certain other significant facts should undeceive us. We are but in the beginning of a battle such as

never before has occurred in the history of the Church. And victory is always on the other side of the battle-field. We must "carry on" to the end, for the gates from which issue the assaults of hell, shall not prevail.

II

Inasmuch as nowhere else in this book have I considered the prophecy of the Virgin Birth, a few words thereat may serve as an introduction to the discussion of this subject. In the Scripture passage which I have placed on the title page, we find this prophecy in the form which Matthew (1:23) quoted from Isaiah (7:14). It is now quite well known that the word "virgin," which Matthew used, is not from the Hebrew original of Isaiah, but from the Greek translation of it known as the Septuagint.

The word which Isaiah employed is "maiden" (*almah*). It means an unmarried female, never a married woman; and its underlying idea or implication is virginity. Certainly it does not exclude this idea. Why then did not Isaiah use the other word (*bethulah*), which commonly means virgin? For the reason that it is sometimes used to designate also a married woman, as it does in Joel 1:8. Had he used this word, opponents of the Virgin Birth would have been as ready to point out that it sometimes means a married woman, as they have been to object that an unmarried maiden is all the word he did use, means, There was no word in the Hebrew which he could have used for virgin which had always meant that and nothing else. He therefore selected the word which had always meant unmarried, trusting to the unsuspecting purity in the reader's mind to get his meaning. The translators chose the Greek word for "virgin" as the one that manifestly fitted the idea which Isaiah had in mind. It is not fair, then, to call this an error of translators. There is a rigid precision

which is more likely to mistranslate than to translate, because it insists on the letter rather than on the spirit, the sense, and the manifest meaning.

It is well to remember that Matthew was not seeking by this prophecy to prove the fact of the Virgin Birth. Nor is it wise for us to seek to establish it in this way. Historical fact should be proven by history. We are on the historical, not the prophetic side of the fact of the Virgin Birth. The Evangelist was looking back from this historical fact to the prophetic announcement corresponding to it. Concerning many of the events he relates in his Gospel he traces the interesting correspondence in Old Testament prediction. Far from turning prophecy into history, he is illuminating history with prophecy, as Doctor David Smith has remarked.

It is true that the passage quoted from Isaiah had not been considered Messianic by the Jews. This would not prove it was not such. Many Old Testament scriptures not considered Messianic by them, were really such. If they did not recognize the Messiah Himself when He came, no wonder they did not recognize some Messianic prophecies. "To Him all the prophets bear witness." The Holy Spirit who gave these prophecies, is the authority on which are Messianic. What a priceless privilege the two on the way to Emmaus on that first Easter had, when Jesus Himself became the Expositor of Old Testament prophecies!

"And He said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe after all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

We may also grant that Isaiah had immediately in mind one to be born in his day when he uttered

this prophecy, and that this one was to be a sign to Ahaz. To compel the passage to have reference to his day alone and exclusively restrict its meaning to this one who was a sign to Ahaz, is to assume unwarrantedly that the prophecy could not have a second and larger fulfillment in another person and in a more remote day. This double fulfillment is not an impossibility; rather it is necessary in this case to a complete fulfillment.

We find that Matthew (2:15) in a similar way quotes "Out of Egypt have I called my Son," where Hosea's prophecy (11:1) plainly referred to the Jewish nation's deliverance under Moses. Matthew's mind illumined by the Holy Spirit sees another fulfillment of this prophecy when Joseph and Mary returned from Egypt "with the young child." In a number of instances Inspiration enabled the prophets to utter more than they realized, to make predictions with more meaning than when applied to immediate circumstances. Later others were inspired of God to unfold this deeper meaning and to show this larger fulfillment of the prophecy.

Some would have us believe that Isaiah was all the time thinking only of his own child to be born of a prophetess (8:3). But this child was not to be born of a virgin and called Immanuel, as was the other. The Immanuel-Child of the Virgin is greater in every way. Like the recurring strain in the theme of a great piece of music the thought of a Most Marvellous Child to be born according to the promise of God, haunts the prophet's mind, and in the following chapter (9:6, 7) once more Isaiah's prophetic description of him breaks forth:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of

David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this."

"To us a Child of hope is born, to us a Son is given;

Him shall the tribes of earth obey, Him all the hosts of heaven.

His name shall be the Prince of Peace, for evermore adored;

The Wonderful, the Counsellor, the great and mighty Lord.

His power increasing still shall spread; His reign no end shall know;

Justice shall guard His throne above, and peace abound below."

"Christ by highest heaven adored; Christ the everlasting Lord;

Late in time behold Him come, offspring of the Virgin's womb:

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail the incarnate Deity!

Pleased as man with men to dwell; Jesus our Immanuel."

CHAPTER V

THE INCARNATION

IF for no other reason than the importance given to it by the present struggle, the doctrine of the Virgin Birth cannot be considered an outworn dogma of the past. While its opponents have said this to discredit it, at the same time they have assailed it with such fury that would lead one to believe they considered it anything but dead and defenceless as a doctrine. As nearly every one must recognize, it is not a dogma of ecclesiastics from bygone days, but a doctrine of the Word of God itself.

So many and far-reaching are the consequences turning upon accepting or rejecting the Miraculous Conception of our Lord, the consideration of this subject will cover several chapters following. It will be necessary to make the discussion as brief and summary as possible. Other books wholly devoted to this subject have room sufficient for more extended treatment. In this chapter we shall take up some of the attempts to discount the importance of this doctrine of the Virgin Birth.

I

"Why not accept the fact of the Virgin Birth without any theory of it?" Because it is impossible to accept a fact without its meaning; and the meaning we find in it, is really our theory of it. Be our understanding of the Incarnation ever so small, that is our theory of it. It has often been proposed in a similar way to accept the fact of the Atonement without any theory of it. All this really offers is to receive Redemption without apprehending any meaning in it. This is as a method worse than buying "a pig in a

poke," for you can't even know what creature is in the bag. The method of accepting fact without theory or void of meaning is simply a way of losing the thing as a fact. In this way we would lose the Incarnation and the Atonement altogether.

II

"Whether the Virgin Birth took place or not is an open question." Certainly any doctrine is an open question to the man who himself opens the question as to the truth of it. The existence of God, Christ's Deity, the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and all the rest of the Christian doctrines may in a similar way be open questions.

Back of the question opened in this way are always two other open questions of a kind: to whom is it an open question, and on what grounds? That a man questions the truth of a doctrine of Christianity, tells us about him rather than about it. Terming the truth of the Virgin Birth an open question does not in the least discredit it. If it did, what truth under heaven could not be discredited on this method? Moreover, the ground for opening a question must be more than an arbitrary decision so to do.

III

"The motive of the Incarnation is everything; the method of it is of no importance." In reply to this it may be said, we deny not the importance of motive, but the false inference that only motive matters. Method is always of some importance. A method might be offered which if adopted would paralyze the motive. The more important the motive, the more important is the method by which the motive is to be carried into effect. The method ought to be commensurate with the motive. Unless it is proportionate to the motive, its insufficiency may be so great, the motive becomes abortive. Motive does

matter, for an inadequate method simply hamstrings its motive.

IV

"The Virgin Birth is not a saving doctrine. No one thinks of presenting it to a convert in an inquiry-room." To this we may say that no doctrine alone can save. One might accept all the Christian doctrines, and still be unsaved. It is accepting not doctrines but the Saviour that saves. Not saving doctrines so-called, but saving faith in the Redeemer secures salvation.

Of course, no one in his senses would think of presenting the Miraculous Conception to a convert inquiring the way of salvation, for the very reason that it is not the initial doctrine for saving faith and Christian experience. Repentance for sin and acceptance of Christ's finished work for our redemption from sin are some of the initial Christian teachings.

Christian experience begins not at the Cradle of Bethlehem but at the Cross of Calvary. If we should throw out all the doctrines of the Christian faith not suited to the moment when a convert is inquiring the way of salvation, we would have some work on our hands; for then very few of them would be entitled to remain.

V

"Christ's Deity is as fully believed in by those rejecting the Virgin Birth as by those accepting it." Hardly! For all disbelieving in His Deity are ranged on that side. As to those who profess to accept fully His Deity while rejecting the Miraculous Conception, they only appear to accept it fully. Believing that He had human parents and therefore a human personality, they offer the defective explanation of His divinity that it is a divine inhabitation of His human personality.

According to this view the origin of the person of

the Son of God was at the time of the Incarnation, and it is foundationally human. This is far from as full and as satisfactory belief in His Deity. That view which regards it as ever existing in preëxistent personality, and that in the Incarnation He added not personality but human nature to His divine, is much more adequate.

The difference between these two views of His Deity will be discussed more at length in a later chapter, where personality foundationally divine will be compared with that foundationally human. Here we may point out that instead of fully believing in His Deity after rejecting His Miraculous Conception, such persons find it extremely difficult, and logically impossible to defend His full Deity.

Grant that He had a human father, and there you must date the beginning of a personality. Here is one rule without exception: personality invariably begins with the function of fatherhood, even as fatherhood invariably begins by a personality being begotten. No one becomes a father till some one becomes his child, and the child is a person. Otherwise what does the father become father of? An impersonality? This is impossible. And certainly a human father cannot become in any real way the father of one already in existence and having already his own father. No personality can have two such origins from two fathers. That would be a superfluity of fathers—and of origins.

If a man became the father of Jesus Christ, then and there His personality began, and so He would not be in that case the eternal Son. God could not be eternally His Father, unless He was eternally His Son; and His glory in this Fatherhood of "the only begotten" will He not share with another. Unless the Son was in existence as a person before the Incarnation and God was always His Father, He was not a divine person, and then it was not a person who

was incarnated, but an impersonality, or the spirit of another person. This would leave the Incarnation with practically no meaning.

Taking the naturalistic view that Jesus Christ is a created human person, we ought then to cease speaking of the Incarnation of Christ and to speak instead of the creation or procreation of Christ. If on the other view He was the Eternal Son, He did not need a human father to originate the person He was, and the personality He had already. And so we are forced to conclude He could not have a human father without losing His place as a divine person. Hence we conclude that if any man thinks he as fully believes in the Deity of Christ after rejecting His Virgin Birth as before, it is because he has not thought the matter through.

VI

"Since Divinity as such cannot be born, one kind of birth in the Incarnation is as good as another." So said a fine English theologian, who himself accepted the Virgin Birth. The statement looks more generous than it really is, because it is the barren platitude of a bald truism. Divinity as such is pure spirit, and of course as pure spirit it cannot have any kind of physical birth. When as pure spirit it can have no kind of birth, kind ceases to have meaning for it in such comparison.

Why take the trouble to say that spirit *as such* cannot be born, or that when it cannot be born, it matters not how it is born? "Divinity as such" is spirit apart from and unrelated to the physical. The "as such" so prescribes it. Of course, true is the truism that the unrelated as such cannot be related; but how much farther do we get by such reasoning than a kitten does in chasing its tail?

When you go into the hole of a truism, you must come out the same hole you went into. Let us remember that in *the Incarnation we are dealing with,*

not divinity as such, but with Incarnation as such. A human soul can never be spirit as such, for it is essentially spirit in relation to body. So in the Incarnation divinity can never be as such, or unrelated, for it is there the very embodiment of relation. Soul, because it is such, shares in the physical process called birth, and it too is said to be born. So God the Son, in relation as such in the Incarnation, shares in its process, and then divinity was as much born as is a soul.

As long as you shut out divinity from manifesting itself in physical relation, physical relation is impossible. We could do the similar thing in the Atonement. We could say that since divinity as such could not die, one kind of a death is as good as another; and had the Lord contracted pneumonia and from it died in bed, it would have been as efficacious atonement as His death on the Cross. This is precisely what some are saying, W. E. Orchard, for example.*

In neither the Incarnation nor the Atonement have we any right to isolate God within His own essence or transcendence, for both are God in relation. The Incarnation is God taking on human nature. In the Atonement God gets under the problem and load of human sin. When He desired to be related to us in the closest way possible to solve this great problem of sin, what man knows that one kind of birth or one kind of death is as good as another? Any kind of birth would not be equally well adapted to the Word becoming flesh; any more than any kind of death could be equally well adapted to being "made sin on our behalf" that thereby "we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

**Sermons on God, Christ, and Man*, p. 194.

VII

"The Virgin Birth is a myth in the main untrue, but with a substratum of truth in it." So was it interpreted by the president of one of our theological seminaries. His charge that inventions and expansions make up the main part of the Biblical narratives, though they have a small nucleus of truth in them, can have but one fitting answer—"Impossible, sir!"

In the nature of the case the Miraculous Conception is either all true, or it is all untrue. Similarly we cannot say with good sense that a woman's honor is in the main gone, but a substratum of her chastity remains; for she is either pure or impure. We would not say that a man is in the main drunk but a substratum of his sobriety remains. The man who reasons in this way creates the suspicion that he himself "has been taking something." If he has, we "must appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober."

How can the Virgin Birth be at the same time mainly myth and yet partly true? Either it took place or it did not. If the substratum of truth which this Modernist president of a theological seminary referred to, is something other than the Miraculous Conception, then the Miraculous Conception did not take place. Let it be said then, with full and final emphasis, that any substratum of truth which leaves the Virgin Birth itself untrue, is not worth considering for a single moment.

CHAPTER VI

THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION

THE Miraculous Conception is the paradox of the Incarnation; for this descent from heaven is the summit of the miraculous. Then to deny the Incarnation is the summit of unbelief in the miraculous. Belief in Calvary based on unbelief in the Incarnation is a supreme futility. Refuse the miracle of the Virgin Birth and you empty the miracle of the Atoning Death. Let us not empty that for which the Son emptied His throne.

"Who did leave His Father's throne
To assume thy flesh and bone."

How the same mind at the same time can attempt to honor Christ's death and belittle His birth, is one of the many mysteries—of iniquity. It is a puzzling contradiction of sinful human nature similar to the denial of Peter, immediately following his confession of the Christ at Cæsarea Philippi. How could the same mouth utter that revelation of the Holy Ghost, and with its next breath become the oracle of the devil? How could Peter be so utterly oblivious to the absolutely opposite character of the two inspirations, or that there were two, or even any? So also in his vision in Joppa he said: "Not so, Lord." Here are two words pointing in one way, and the third facing in absolutely opposite direction. What terrible moral and spiritual contradiction can be packed into the smallest space, and in most painful contiguity in a human soul!

Objections to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth seem in one way at least to be like the evil spirits possessing the Gadarene demoniac: they are legion.

With entertaining demons, expressing doubt, or finding fault, once the process begins there is no stopping place. Seven sample objections to the Miraculous Conception will be considered in this and the following chapter. The discussion here presented is not at all exhaustive. May it not prove exhausting—except to unbelief.

I

“The two Biblical narratives of the Miraculous Conception are imitations of pagan stories of the incarnation of pagan deities.” In reply to this we may say, it would be quite as reasonable to consider Christ Himself an imitation of heathen religionists. The devil has well been called “the Ape of God.” Evil must always imitate the good; but the good never needs to imitate evil. It is then a question of which we consider the good—Paganism or Christianity.

From its beginning Jewish thought has been utterly opposed to belief in the incarnation of the Deity. And to this day opposition to it remains practically intact in Israel. Something more than a desire to imitate other religions overcame this strong repugnance. Psychologically it was practically impossible for a Jew to fabricate a tale of the incarnation of a divine person. We can trust his unitarianism for that.

We may safely reason that what a Jew would not originate, he would not imitate. He despised all heathenism; but nothing in it more than its filthy stories of divine incarnations. How very unlikely then that he should set himself to copy that most repugnant of all to his soul! Yet we have two Jews, each writing in his Gospel his own account of Christ as “God with us.” Evidently, something stronger than their repugnance had overcome it. What was it? To say it was their desire to imitate heathenism is rather puerile, for imitation in such matters would

follow only in the line of admiration; and in this case, as we have seen, admiration is out of the question. Besides the substance and setting are so thoroughly Jewish, these narratives could not be imitations of heathen thought.

The study of Comparative Religion is of help at this point. Except for a stop-at-nothing apologist, any one who has read the filthy, sensual, and indecent stories of the immoral gods of paganism in their fleshly cohabitation with women could not for a moment think of the pure, chaste accounts of the Miraculous Conception as imitations of them. The pure is not an imitation of the impure, the decent of the indecent, the clean of the unclean.

II

"The Virgin Birth story is a pious fraud, a poetic halo cast about the beginning of a great life." Such an explanation has strongly appealed to minds unable to distinguish between poetic license and a license to lie, and which naturally think much on the subject of pious fraud. The accusation being based wholly on supposition of fraud, there must be some psychological condition in the accuser to account for it.

From start to finish the writers of the Gospels show that they were as honest and truthful men as ever lived. They were not the least inclined to fabricate material. Possessing a vast body of facts about the wondrous life and person of their Lord, they had more than they could do to relate them all. Instead of needing to conjure up tales of fiction, they had an embarrassment in riches of reliable material; and they had the Holy Spirit. To accuse them of inventing this pious fraud is like charging two multi-millionaires with counterfeiting a few dollars.

That others imposed on their innocent piety, telling them fiction as fact, does not help. Adoring

Him as the Truth Incarnate would hardly lead the evangelists to invent fraud to explain Him. These writers were entrusted with the most important reportorial task in all human history. For them to invent or forge the story of Christ's birth would be disingenuous. How could misrepresenting His origin help Him? Other founders of religion may have needed the doubtful help of pious fraud. The nature of Christianity is such that fraud could but mar and hinder it. This the first disciples understood quite as fully as we do.

It is a mistake to consider fraud and poetry as congenial counterparts. Poetry for one thing is beauty; and there is no special beauty in untruth set forth as truth. Moreover, poetry should not be credited with the privilege of originating historical facts, whether they are pictured as events of beauty or of prosaic plainness.

Surely these early disciples knew their Lord well enough to realize that such a halo of fraud would be to Him another crown of thorns. Why should these loving and loyal followers of Christ who knew Him so well, be accused of imitating His enemies and thus crowning this King of Truth with thorns of fraud about His paternity? Many today who do not seem to know Him well enough to prevent it, are cradling the Babe of Bethlehem in thorns of misrepresentation. Is not this torture of Him enough without scourging these first followers of His as well?

Poetry is never a suitable excuse for falsehood, religious or otherwise. The poetry of a lie about the Living Truth is like the beauty of the blackness of iniquity; for it in fact is the very quintessence of ugliness, the opposite to the beauty of holiness, and marring everything it touches. The sin of a lie but adds the dense darkness of its own unexplainable mystery; and so can explain nothing, least of all the

unique beginning of the greatest and purest life of all, for a lie adds mystery, never explanation.

III

"The story of the Miraculous Conception reflects on the sanctity of natural human parenthood." This we deny. It has not been so considered by those whose lives have been really affected by belief in it. Those denying it, and consequently with their lives unaffected by it, make this reflection on it. They are therefore not competent to bear witness on this point. They might as well say that the Gospel is a reflection on the sanctity of the law; or that the miracle of turning water into wine is a reflection on cultivating grapes; or that the feeding of the five thousand is a reflection on the raising of grain and the baking of bread. What God has done to cleanse parenthood, call not common or unclean reflection on that which he has thus cleansed by Redemption.

Certainly God in sending his Son into the world by the Miraculous Conception never meant to cast any reproach on the natural parenthood which he himself had appointed. Is it not patently perverse to interpret the Virgin Birth as a reflection on that which is good? Christ came *to honor* by His Redemption parenthood and all other human relations. Some so dislike the supernatural, they look upon it as essentially a reflection on the natural. The Miraculous Conception, they therefore feel, reflects on their particular view.

God's existence is certainly supernatural; and it is no reflection on ours. Our Lord did many miraculous deeds; none of them reflected on anything good. His Virgin Birth is no more a reflection on natural parenthood than His Deity is a reflection on His humanity. As a matter of fact the Virgin Birth has done more to sanctify human parenthood than all the births besides it in human history.

IV

"The Miraculous Conception should be rejected on account of its mystery and difficulty." The sufficient answer to this objection is, if mystery and difficulty are fatal, we must reject all we know and the natural as well as the supernatural. In fact the Natural apart from the Supernatural becomes thereby far more mysterious and unexplainable.

In any case, mystery is but the mark of the boundary line of our knowledge. What mystery there is in electricity, and in the atomless, structureless ether pervading all space and bringing to us the vibrations of light from far-away worlds! As some one has said, about all we know about the ether is that it gives us a convenient noun for the verb to vibrate.

There is nothing in the natural realm about which we know all. So there is nothing in Nature without its attendant mystery. At every point where the natural and the supernatural, the finite and the infinite, the human and the divine touch each other, there is bound to be mystery and difficulty. As long as we do not know everything about anything, this mystery and difficulty must everywhere remain.

One very great merit of the Virgin Birth story is that it offers to us a maximum of revelation with a minimum of mystery. It is the irreducible minimum of difficulty. Other attempted explanations create far more difficulties than they solve. Is Joseph Jesus' father? This Joseph disclaims, when, if he were the Messiah's father, there was every reason why he should own it. If he did not deny it, the Gospel writers were guilty of a most serious crime in representing that he did.

That a Roman soldier was the illegitimate father of the Christ, is an old canard of enemies. Origen tells us in detail of its manufacture and use, even of the soldier's name. This libel on the character of the mother of the purest man ever born, creates a

whole host of difficulties of the most serious nature. Not least among them is the need of explaining the disposition that resorts to such a suggestion wantonly, namely, of illicit and immoral relations within the very Holy of holies of Christianity. And this disposition claims to be more inspired of the Holy Spirit than Matthew and Luke.

One very great thing in favor of the Virgin Birth story is that its difficulty and mystery casts no aspersion on the good name of any one concerned. Far more wanton than an immoral father is the foul accusation of the purity of Mary who was called of God to the holiest service of all motherhood. This illegitimate solution of the mystery and difficulty makes Mary the target of a vile and vicious calumny to support by its slander its own illegitimacy. Both this theory and its support are thoroughly of a kind.

Any other account of Christ's origin than the one given in Holy Writ creates many collateral difficulties far more difficult to explain. How a Babe of such humble birth, whether born with Joseph or any other man as its father, could cause all the commotion and steady stir of events in His infant days, is inexplicable when the supernatural nature of His person is thus disallowed.

Mystery and difficulty are not by any means monopolized by the story of the Virgin Birth. Plainly it has less of both than any of the opposing suppositions. And it does not ring down the curtain upon those in the center of the stage all bespattered and besmirched with foul disgrace of *Scarlet Letter* shame published to all the world. If any of those perpetrating this gratuitous attempt to defame the mother of Jesus, Joseph, and Jesus Himself, should ever meet them face to face in another world, though no bitterness would shine forth from the eyes of the wronged, methinks those who committed this outrage, not a sin of weakness but of viciousness, would

wish to hide themselves in the depths of darkness, and call on mountains of oblivion to hide them from the gaze of the unsullied purity their wanton attempt would have foully besmeared.

V

"Belief in the Miraculous Conception hinders liberty and impairs efficiency in Christian work." So a theological novel of some years ago would have us believe. Pay the small sum of its purchase price, and you take away its secret of how to obtain full liberty and empowerment, namely, by throwing overboard all faith in the miraculous. There is nothing new in this; and it proposes a very costly experiment.

Whatever represents that a minister of the Gospel is inefficient because of his faith in the Supernatural, has the whole of Christian history squarely against it. That the Church of God is filled with hypocrites because they believe in such stories as the Virgin Birth, is simply offering defamation as diagnosis. In all similar books there is a method in their mad hate of the miraculous. The cup they would put to the lips of readers is brimming over with things untrue. More is needed than to cleanse the inside of it; for the very material out of which it is made, is unclean because false. This 'cup of Naturalism that would smash confidence in the Word of God, should be itself smashed and ground to powder and sunk in the depths of the sea, lest some innocent child be poisoned and irreparably damaged in mind and soul by it.

The world has yet to see a single instance in which a preacher gained efficiency in winning men from lives of sin and unto Christ through casting away faith in His Virgin Birth and the miracles of the New Testament, and the Deity of the One who died for us all. The fact is that in every instance of lost faith in the miraculous, preachers have lost power for this

great work. When Evangelist B. Fay Mills renounced confidence in the Supernatural, his marvellous spiritual power vanished; and he quit the evangelistic field. Thank God, he later came back, but not long before he died.

It takes some hardihood to write a book with trumped up instances to show that doses of bichloride of mercury add to a man's strength; but not more than to write one with its trumped up instances to show surrender to crass Naturalism increases the efficiency of preachers and churches in winning men to God. For near two millenniums of Church history the success which attended Christian soul-winners, outstanding or obscure, was never known to come by way of the bog of the anti-miraculous method. When the anti-supernaturalist author is able to point to even one historical instance where the Holy Spirit was poured out to bless anti-supernaturalism with revival power to win men from the life of sin, it will be far more convincing than the manufactured instance of success portrayed in a book of fiction-theology.

CHAPTER VII

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

JESUS CHRIST did not promise His disciples an easy time and freedom from conflict. He frankly told them that what the world had done unto Him it would do unto them because they were of Him. He said the enemy would sow tares among the wheat of God; and both would grow up together until the harvest. He made plain that the tares are persons. While we cannot root up and destroy them, we should root up and destroy the seed of false doctrine. The early church had a constant contest with false teaching. That contest is still on and will be until the end of the age. In this chapter we shall continue the consideration of the attacks upon the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Two more remain to be analyzed.

I

“All except two of the New Testament writers reject the Virgin Birth story as their silence about it shows.” This is widely known and heralded as “the argument of silence.” Evidently it is a great favorite among anti-miraculists, judging by the frequency of its use by them.

But there is no argument of silence. What seems so is supposition and misinterpretation. Only two writers of the New Testament mention the Virgin Birth because only two discuss Christ’s birth and infancy. No writer covering this ground is silent about the Virgin Birth. If there were one such, then there would be some argument of silence. To call a man’s absence an idleness when he is busy elsewhere, is anything but fair. When the other writers of the

New Testament are busy bearing witness on other matters than the beginning of Christ's life on earth, to call this a silence is unwarranted assumption, an inference not founded on fact.

How a man's intent gives form and character to his statement! "Only two of the Gospels give the story of the Virgin Birth; the rest are silent about it." This statement bears the marks of intent to discredit. The intent to be fair would say, "All the Gospels relating the birth and childhood of Christ tell of His Virgin Birth." Any clever opponent can twist and turn the truth against itself. He who seeks the truth and nothing but the truth wants no such torturing of truth on the rack of hostile artifice.

The significance of silence is only when speech may fairly be expected. Speech may be fairly expected only when the matter in question is within the limits of the discussion. Since the limits of their discussion did not include the beginning of Christ's life, to call this lack of discussion on the part of New Testament writers, other than Matthew and Luke, silence, is to utter more than platitude, even perversity. It is wresting the Scriptures to break up confidence in them.

If a minister is discussing the Resurrection, that he believes the Crucifixion took place is the natural inference. To say because he did not discuss the Crucifixion while speaking on the Resurrection that he does not believe that the former event took place, is to attempt to wrench a testimony from him which is not in him. To make the so-called silence of Mark, John, and Paul a proof that they denied thereby the Virgin Birth, is to try to force from them a witness they did not bear. What a tangle of contradiction the New Testament would become if everything not duplicated in every one of its writings must be taken as thereby denied!

Why is it that the Virgin Birth is singled out to

have the argument of silence used against it? Hosts of other things are accepted which are mentioned by only two and in many cases by only one of the New Testament writers. For example, the Ascension is described by Luke alone. Mark merely mentions it in concluding his Gospel. The Sermon on the Mount is given in full by Matthew alone and never referred to by John or by Paul. Many other incidents, teachings, parables, and miracles could be cited which are recorded by one or perhaps by two of the New Testament writers, but are not questioned because of this.

II

From every point of view the two accounts we have of the Virgin Birth are eminently satisfactory. They supplement each other perfectly. These narratives could not be more circumstantially correct and in keeping with the purpose of each Gospel. It is agreed that Matthew writes from the point of view of Joseph, and Luke from that of Mary. Both accounts are written in thoroughly Jewish fashion. The internal evidence of genuineness is as good as ever found anywhere. Each Gospel is throughout consistent with such a beginning as this. Luke records in the Annunciation, "He shall be called Son of the Highest"; and in his genealogical table he speaks of Jesus as "the son (as was supposed) of Joseph." He tells that the demons knew Him to be "the Holy One of God." And he gives the Father's acknowledgment on the Transfiguration Mount, "This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye Him." He reports with Matthew the words, "No one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is save the Son." Luke gives the parable of the vineyard in which after the servants are sent and refused, the owner says, "I will send my beloved son." He mentions the Messianic question of Christ, How could David at the same time

call Him both Lord and his son? The Virgin Birth is the answer.

Matthew also in the twenty-second chapter records this crucial question at the end of the Day of Trials. He began his Gospel by calling Christ "the son of David." He quotes the prophecy of the Virgin Birth, and also that of the calling of God's Son out of Egypt. He too tells of the Father acknowledging the Son at His baptism. He forgets not the promise of Christ to come in the glory of His Father with His angels to judge every man. Matthew also gives the challenge of the High Priest when he put Jesus on oath as to whether He was the Son of God. The High Priest showed how he understood Jesus' acknowledgment of this, when he rent his garments and called this confession blasphemy.

III

While Mark like John begins his Gospel with the public ministry of Jesus, unlike him he never mentions Joseph, and begins his story with the declaration of the divine Sonship of the Lord, and always speaks of Him as the Son of Mary. He records the two acknowledgments of the Father that Jesus is His Son, namely at His baptism and transfiguration. If Mark wrote at Peter's direction, we have Peter's same remembrance of the latter event in his Second Epistle, 2:17: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven when we were with Him in the holy mount."

The three Synoptic Gospels have much material in common, but John's is plainly supplementary. It alone gives, as G. Campbell Morgan notes, the account of the first year of Christ's ministry. If there was a different account to be given of His birth, no doubt John would have furnished it. His opening sentences about the Eternal Word who created all things and

was made flesh, the Creator become creature, are surely harmonious with the Miraculous Conception. His Prologue plainly implies that Jesus did not come into human life as does an ordinary human child. Moreover there is good evidence that John made explicit reference to the Virgin Birth besides the expression "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father."

We have three manuscripts that go back to within three hundred years of the writing of the Gospels—the Sinaitic, the Alexandrian, and the Vatican. Both Irenæus and Tertullian tell us of the Western Version of John's Gospel, which is two hundred years earlier than these manuscripts. From their quotations we learn that this Version applies the passage in the first chapter, verse thirteen, to Jesus' birth. In it but two words are different, changed from the plural to the singular, one of these by the omission of a single letter. This is the slight difference from the text adopted by Westcott and Hort. There is strong internal evidence that this variant is what John wrote. It reads:

"But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, to them that believe on His name, *even Him* who was begotten, not of bloods (of a father and a mother), nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man (a human father), but of God."

Except the words "who was born," the rest of the passage is the same in all these codices as in the Western Variant. If John wrote the plural in these words, what follows must apply to the regeneration of those who believe on Jesus. This has the difficulty that we can find no definite distinction between the two expressions, "the will of the flesh, and the will of a man," when here used in contrast to the will of God. If the Western Version of two hundred years earlier is the true one, and the passage refers to the

birth of Christ, the reason for the two expressions named in this contrast and the distinction between them are clear. He was not born of human desire, and had no human father. Also added meaning is given by this Version to the phrase, "Not of bloods," for He was of one blood. This is just the precision of expression one finds in Scripture. Here then we have the most concise, the neatest statement of the Virgin Birth ever seen. There is more internal evidence for the genuineness of this Version. That Jesus' birth was that John had in mind, is borne out by the thought immediately following: "And the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as an only begotten from a Father)." This continues the thought—He was begotten, not of a man, but of the heavenly Father.

This interpretation agrees well with the theme of John in his Gospel that Jesus is God the Son. Compare chapter 5:18, "He . . . also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." Chapter 10:33, 36, "Thou, being a man, makest thyself God . . . Because I said, I am the Son of God." Also 19:7, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Constantly conscious of His divine Sonship, Jesus says: "The Father hath sent me." "I am come down from heaven." "Ye know not whence I come." "He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." That John never even distantly alluded to the Virgin Birth, as Fosdick says, in his published sermon, "*Shall the Fundamentalists Win?*" is not then so certain. But what of it? Is he who refuses to believe Matthew and Luke, ready to believe John?

IV

The relations between Luke and Paul as missionary companions were so intimate, what one knew about the origin of Christ, the other did. And Luke

had taken the greatest care as to the sources of his material. The trained mind of this physician shows the scientific method of approach:

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fully established among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus."

We could scarcely expect Paul to discuss the Virgin Birth, for he was concerned with post-resurrection thought; but his whole scheme of this was based on belief in the supernatural nature of Christ and His personal pre-existence. His Kenotic doctrine of how the Son "emptied Himself of His heavenly glory" at the Incarnation, implies this. In his address at Antioch of Pisidia he quotes the Messianic Second Psalm as to the paternity and place of the Messiah that explain His resurrection and redemptive work: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten Thee." His remarkable Galatian statement (Gal. 4:4), "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law," could scarcely have come from one ignorant of the Virgin Birth.

The unknown writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews begins it with a declaration of Christ's divine Sonship. He too quotes the same passage from the Second Psalm, and also from the Seventh: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son." There is no more dramatic piece of literature anywhere than the passage that follows. Around that manger cradle of His Bethlehem Babe God calls from every quarter of the universe His innumerable hosts of angels: "And when He bringeth in the Firstborn into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him."

A fair and impartial statement of the New Testament testimony as a whole would be—those of its writers who cover the ground of the birth and childhood of Jesus, gave a full and circumstantial account of the Miraculous Conception and all matters connected with it; and the other writers, while covering other ground, say nothing inconsistent with faith in it; and in almost every instance they imply, at some point, knowledge of it.

V

There is further the matter of a true interpretation of silence. Those attacking with their argument of silence are wrongly assuming that silence means only denial. Surely this is not the only interpretation of it possible. As a rule "silence gives consent." If what is called the silence of the other New Testament writers, was intended by these writers to mean contradiction of the story of the Virgin Birth, it would convict them of being witnesses, unworthy because cowardly in this most important matter, and seriously deficient in moral candor in not openly challenging the truth of the account given, and then giving the true account, for we have no other account of Jesus' birth. Thus the argument of silence proves either too much or nothing at all.

That the other New Testament writers besides Matthew and Luke did not cover this ground of the birth and childhood of Jesus is most fairly taken to mean something other than ignorance or denial of the Virgin Birth. It would mean most naturally that they saw no reason for dissatisfaction with the accounts of the two evangelists. It is well to remember that the substance of the Gospel story had been repeated orally hundreds of times before it was reduced to writing. Perhaps the very ones named as silent in their writings about the early days of Jesus, had told to audiences where it could be told the story

of the Miraculous Birth scores of times. When they did cover this ground in their preaching, where is the proof that they were silent about the Virgin Birth? There is none, and so no argument of silence.

When a man is so opposed to the miraculous that he would not believe any number of witnesses to it, he should not object to the number of only two witnesses testifying to it. When on principle he objects to the story of the Miraculous Conception, it is poor principle to make it appear that his objection arises from paucity of witnesses in this matter. They who will not believe the three, Matthew, Luke, and the Holy Spirit, would not believe thirty-three. Stripped of disguise this argument of silence is not so much a search for truth as a search for disagreement, or for that which might be made to appear disagreement among those who are plainly testifying to the truth.

VI

The argument of silence is utterly unreliable because it creates an artificial and unreal situation which it foists upon the writers of the New Testament. These writers never thought of themselves as the joint-authors of a book, and that everything they did not duplicate in the associate writings, even when covering entirely different ground, would be taken as contradiction. As we know, it was some time after they were all dead that their writings were brought together in what we have as the New Testament canon. So this argument of silence puts those now in "the Silence of the Great Beyond" in this entirely false position of which they never dreamed while living. It is not a very brave thing to put the dead in Christ in situations which were unknown to them when on earth, and make them appear opposing each other in these positions.

VII

When there is any measure of silence, discretion not denial may be the reason for it. Jesus gave the discretion of spiritual discrimination as a sufficient reason for silence when in certain situations. He said: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." This holy jewel of Revelation about the Incarnation needs due appreciation. But it is no more to some than a string of pearls would be to pups or pigs, to speak as plainly as Jesus did.

No doubt Joseph and Mary must have feared to reveal to unbelievers the story of the Miraculous Conception. Both of them would be naturally reticent because of the difficulty of proof to an enemy, and the proneness of human nature everywhere to think evil even where no evil is. After two thousand years it remains unchanged in this respect. And the unbelieving are as ready as ever to put the worst construction on such a difficult situation as that in which Mary and Joseph found themselves. The very argument of silence is proof of the need of silence in the presence of the purpose to rend what you say.

Where interest and sympathy made it possible to tell the whole truth about this wondrous birth, Mary and Joseph would not be desirous that such confidential information should be broadcast at once. No doubt at the very first not very many were trusted with it. The praiseworthy desire to shield Mary from the evil of slanderous gossip would be the reason why the story of the Miraculous Conception would be among the very last things told in public address and writing. Not this private and domestic miracle, but the great public miracles like the Resurrection and the Ascension would be first witnessed to in apostolic preaching. When the fuller and final proofs of the Deity of Christ had prepared the Christian fol-

lowers for the story of the Virgin Birth, it could be divulged with more safety. And when Mary had passed to "where the wicked cease from troubling," the divine mystery could be more publicly told without reflection upon her reputation. Jesus commanded a similar temporary silence about the Transfiguration till after the Resurrection. So the preliminary silence of wise discretion about exhibiting publicly this holy mystery of the Virgin Birth should not be taken as denial of it.

VIII

"The doctrine of the Virgin Birth should be rejected because of its lack of illumination from the theory of evolution." But this is no reason to condemn it. Jesus said some light is darkness: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." Internal darkness is the deepest and densest of all. Evolution is not a theory coming from Nature without, but from nature within men's minds darkened without the light of the Supernatural. A theory is something that is not able to externalize itself in the light of common knowledge. It is guess not gospel, supposition not demonstration.

This theory of the naturalistic mind has no light in it to account for Jesus Christ; and the very soul of Naturalism seems to have embodied and revealed itself in this theory of darkness professing to explain light. To the anti-supernaturalist it is the greatest of all truths, and to it every knee should bow and every tongue confess. But this honor belongs to Him who is the Truth. To take it from Him and give it to this theory is to make the theory another anti-Christ.

Some evolutionists, still clinging in faint faith to the supernatural, try to add light to the theory of evolution sufficient to explain the Incarnation by putting a skylight in it, and then calling it "theistic evolution." Unfortunately the skylight instead of

being in the roof is in the floor of its dark attic. "Theistic evolution" but adds confusion to that already worse confounded. One does not account for the miracle of turning water into wine by saying it was done by theistic fermentation. When Christ cursed the barren fig tree, it was not by theistic horticulture. When He walked on the water, to say it was done by theistic gravitation, would hardly do. If gravitation itself is insufficient to explain the miracle, tacking on to it the tag "theistic" does not help. The miracle was not done by gravitation of any sort, but by a power wholly outside and above it. So the miracle of the Incarnation was not by evolution at all, but by a power outside and above natural process. There is no such thing as theistic gravitation or theistic evolution. If it is theistic, it isn't gravitation; if it is gravitation, it isn't theistic. If the Incarnation is by evolution, it isn't theistic; if it is theistic, it isn't by evolution. If a thing is done by supernatural agency, you cannot explain it by natural agency tagged with a supernatural adjective. When you add to a noun designating the natural an adjective which describes or designates the supernatural, all you have gained is contradiction. The adjectives of the natural and the supernatural applied together nullify each other. A supernatural natural process is a contradiction in terms. "Theistic evolution" means supernatural natural agency.

IX

Speaking of contradiction in terms leads one to say that it is high time that evolutionists cease calling evolution a scientific theory. If it is science, it is not theory; and if it is theory, it is not science. Science being knowledge verified and classified cannot be theory.

This theory is philosophic, not scientific. As President Edgar Y. Mullins, in *Christianity at the*

Crossroads, has recently pointed out, it is the philosophic theory of Continuity. According to it all now in the universe has always been here, and development explains everything that now is and ever has been. Nature is hermetically sealed and nothing new is ever added to it. Creation has no place in the universe. Jesus Christ had his origin in protoplasm. The materialistic evolutionist would go even further back than this. All this is effect infinitely greater than its cause. But the very virtue of the Incarnation is that in it an entirely new force entered in this new and living way into the world for the redemption of man. Either the theory of evolution breaks with Him; or it breaks Him. But not a bone of Him shall be broken; not a word of His fail. The whole natural world will pass away; but His word shall not pass away. He shall reign forever; no cobweb theories of philosophy can stay the eternal triumphant march of His power.

Evolutionists of every stripe deny that the story given us in Genesis that God created all, is true, and that it is the Word of God. Instead, man and lower orders were evolved from still lower forms of life. Mr. Theistic Evolutionist says this is God's way of working; but he says God did create the *oözoa*, the dawn-life. Then God changed His way and abolished creation in favor of evolution. Then He became Evolutor instead of Creator. So runs this philosophy of Continuity into denial of continuity in the way of the working of God in Nature.

Over and over again in Creation's story in the Bible is the assertion, yea, the law of God, that everything brings forth after its kind. *This law man has never once seen broken*. Here we have no theory; but the theory of Evolution requires that this law has been broken every time a new species appeared; and that things then bring forth after a superior kind. This mutation of species contrary to all human obser-

vation, knowledge, or science is then called "a scientific theory"! Why not let philosophic theorists acknowledge their own imaginations? Why not let scientists be scientists, instead of wet nurses for the theory babies of philosophic harems?

No one really needs the help of philosophic theory posing as science to enable him to believe what he sees with his own eyes, namely, natural development within species. How often this is palmed off as proof of transmutation of species! Suppose the tiny fox-size animal called the five-toed horse were really a horse and developed into the one-toed or hoof-horse, no new species has evolved. Nothing whatever has been proved about evolution; for it does not prove that one species develops out of another, because there is development within species or variation.

Those who cannot believe the Word of God about creation, have wondrous power of credulity about this theory of evolution and everything they imagine supports it. They choke with a gnat of Revelation and swallow a whole train of evolutionary camels. They believe in spite of the fact that no one has ever seen come to pass what they believe. God Himself asks no such credulity. He says: "Taste, and see that the Lord is good."

Theory passes into science when it is verified by observation. The agonizing question of the ardent evolutionist is, "Why doesn't evolution 'evolute' now?" Nobody is trying to stop it. It has the most favorable conditions it ever had, for now the faith of all its devoted followers is urging it on. The cry that it needs more than six thousand years of observation to prove it, gives us no information how many more millenniums it will take. Strange that it has worked forever, yet does not work now! Perhaps this theory is like the boy's statement that "Cedar posts last forever: father tried them twice." If it is God's way of

working, why does He not do something at it? for, as Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

X

Because the Incarnation is the coming of the Supernatural by supernatural means, it is not within the scope of naturalistic theory or explanation. To reject the Incarnation because we did not see it, is to accord it a very different treatment from that evolutionists accord to their theory.

The theistic evolutionary view of the Incarnation is that Christ had a human father. This denies, of course, the Miraculous Conception; but it grants that there was an extraordinary immanence of God in the ordinary means of human propagation. This gives us but a human being with a special capacity for the indwelling of God. But a superior man is not the God-man, the incarnation of God. When the theory of evolution is not adequate to explain the Christ, it means that evolution was not adequate to produce Him. No evolution of man can be the incarnation of God.

Progressive incarnation by the evolution of natural growth during Christ's life is as insufficient as the evolutionary view of His birth. The natural development of the incarnate life was His progress as the Son of God, not His progress in becoming the Son of God. There was not a moment after the Miraculous Conception that He was not perfectly human and divine natures perfectly united. As a babe He was perfect but not perfected. A bud may be perfect but is not perfected till it becomes the flower. Immaturity of growth is not imperfection in kind.

Jesus was not the union of partly human and partly divine natures. His divine nature needed no development to make it fully divine. And His human nature did not need to grow in order to become truly human. In Christ as an unborn babe, Deity and

humanity were as perfectly united as in His mature manhood. The smallest human embryo is as truly human as the babe after birth or the mature man. So the union of His human and divine natures did not come about gradually, bit by bit approximating perfect union. Some unions are not formed gradually, for example, the marriage union. Progressive marriage has not been adopted in civilized countries.

Biology teaches us that the epigenetic union takes place at once. So the perfect union of the two natures of the incarnate Christ took place at the moment of epigenesis in the Miraculous Conception. The development following this perfect union is a very different thing from development toward perfect union.

Increasing capacity for the indwelling of God that came by the growth of Christ's human nature, is not the Incarnation. It is simply the way in which the ordinary development of Christian personality takes place. Every growing Christian is not an instance of God incarnating Himself. The natural growth of Jesus' human nature should not be termed progressive incarnation.

No amount of divine indwelling in the ordinary means of human generation can in the least alter the fact that it is human, and that the personality thereby begotten is generically human. In fact it is then all the more purely human. Extraordinary divine indwelling in one who has a human father, does not in the least alter the fact that his personality is, and must eternally remain, foundationally and fundamentally human. No man is a divine person because the divine was present in the full human means by which he was begotten. So we conclude that the evolutionary explanation of progressive incarnation is not sufficient to account for the incarnation of Christ. It is progressive where we do not want it—in dispensing with the Deity of the Redeemer. And

it takes as much more than Naturalism to account for Him, as He is more than man, and man is more than mineral.

XI

Doctor David Smith has lately presented in the *British Weekly* the interesting view that Jesus had not only no human father, but no human mother. The Virgin Mary provided not even the ovum of the embryo, but only the nidus by which it was attached and through which it was nourished. Instead of half, the whole embryo was miraculously created. This view commends itself in the room that it gives to the supernatural in the Incarnation, perhaps the most room of any view. And a special creation of humanity seems appropriate for the incarnation of the Creator-Redeemer. And it explains more clearly His sinlessness in that his human nature could have in this way no hereditary taint in it, but was a new and pure creation of sinless human nature.*

Doctor Smith points out that there is no record that Jesus ever called Mary His mother. It does grate terribly on Protestant ears to hear Mary called "the Mother of God." To this view there is the objection that wholly miraculously made humanity is not the incarnation of Deity. Nor would the miraculous creation of a human sperma give us the Incarnation of the divine. Unless the life in the sperma was itself divine, not human, there is no explanation embryonic, physiological or otherwise to account for the union of the divine and human natures in the Miraculous Conception. Was not the deeper miracle and mystery, not the creation, but the union? In any case it takes far more than a mere miracle to account for and explain the Incarnation. It is not enough to insist on a Miraculous Conception. That alone is not sufficient, for the Incarnation is the Miracle of all Mira-

*See *The Days of His Flesh*, p. 528, where Dr. Smith presents the same thought.

cles, the Miracle-Worker Himself become the Miracle. There God the Son made man is the Miracle. There the Creator creates Himself conjoined Creator-Creature. So we conclude that while the Incarnation calls for not less than a Miraculous Conception, it calls for vastly more.

It is difficult to see from Doctor Smith's view how the Eternal Son became a member of our race, took on our human nature when Mary merely nourished the embryo in her womb. That by its nidus would be but a parasitic union. Of course, there is the answer that this union was a creative one. The created humanity He took on was from the same creative source from which Adam was taken. But this does not account for Him as the Incarnate One, who was the seed of the woman, the Son of David, the Netzar or Branch, "bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh," "made of a woman, made under the law."

CHAPTER VIII

THE SUPERNATURAL SON

BECAUSE God is infinite, He must reveal Himself to the finite, if the finite is to know Him. No matter how many times we multiply the finite, we never could thereby reach the infinite. No matter how much we elevate the natural, we do not thereby have the supernatural. There is a world of difference between the God who reveals Himself and the god which is conjured up by human imagination.

The Incarnation is the supreme, unique way in which God does reveal Himself. There the infinite is manifest in the finite, the supernatural in the natural. The Incarnation is not man imagining how God might make Himself known, but how He did actually reveal Himself. It is the love of God telling its own story in its own way, and yet in the language of man.

“Lord Jesus, God and man,
For love of God a child,
The very God, yet born on earth
Of Mary undefiled.”

Having considered some of the more prominent arguments used against the reliability of the scriptural record of the Virgin Birth, we may now turn to some of the more prominent arguments on the other side. Of course many more reasons than these could be given why the Bible's story of the Son of God becoming man is still cherished as true. As the opening verse of the Crusader's Hymn has it:

“Fairest Lord Jesus! Ruler of all Nature!
O Thou of God and man the Son,
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.”

I

The Christian Church has from the beginning accepted as true the story of the Virgin Birth. The oldest manuscripts have intact both Matthew's and Luke's accounts of it. There is no contemporaneous writing opposing their testimony. Ignatius living early in the second century and writing as the Bishop of Antioch to the Symareans, says: "as touching our Lord . . . truly born of a virgin." Doctor Robert E. Speer, in discussing this subject, says:

"Aristides of Athens, in his Apology, dating about the year 130, writes: 'The Christians trace their descent from the Lord Jesus . . . having been born of a holy virgin.' Justin Martyr in his First Apology, written between 140 and 150, says: 'We find it foretold in the Books of the Prophets that Jesus Christ should come, born of a virgin.' . . . And so I might quote Irenæus (190), Tertullian (200) Clement (190), Origen (230)."

Doctor Speer then quotes Professor Zahn as saying:

"This (the virgin birth) has been an element of the creed as far as we can trace it back; and if Ignatius can be taken as a witness, of a Baptismal creed springing from early Apostolic times, certainly in that creed the name of the Virgin Mary already has its place. . . . We may further assert that during the first four centuries of the church, no teacher and no religious community which can be considered with any appearance of right as an heir of original Christianity, had any other notion of the beginning of the (human) life of Jesus of Nazareth. . . . The theory of an original Christianity without the belief in Jesus the Son of God, born of the Virgin, is a fiction."

That the early church was divided on this matter is pure fabrication. There is not the slightest suggestion from any source of any in the apostolic Church refusing to believe it. This we could not say about even the Resurrection of Christ. The Modernist's claim that not until the second century did the invention of this story take place, is answered by the first century Gospels containing it.

Of course, unbelief in His Virgin Birth, as also unbelief in the Deity of Christ sprang up, but not within and nourished by the Church. Until our own day practically every bit of unbelief in the Virgin Birth was originated and grown on the outside, and came from external enemies, not from within the Church. Only in our own day have men assailed the truth of the Scripture's account of the Miraculous Conception and claimed the right to stay within "the Fold of the Faithful."

No new and adverse facts of history have been discovered which have led in our day to the most determined and general assault on this doctrine in the history of the Church; but the tremendous revival of Naturalism, as earlier noted, is the manifest cause. A militant Naturalism has invaded schools, colleges, seminaries, and the church. Like the aroma of boiling sauer-kraut on the first floor in a poorly equipped tenement spreading throughout the whole building, the aroma of naturalistic unbelief seems to be present in almost every habitat and workshop of the Christian life.

The Virgin Birth is not disbelieved passively: persistent war is made upon this doctrine, and, as already said, without the discovery of a solitary historical fact to discredit it. But the theory of evolution has been discovered; and infatuated with it, many seem to think they are called of God to destroy everything which cannot be explained by it, or is found to be not a support to it.

The re-writing of history to make it conform with modern naturalistic theory, is reprehensible. If fact must be made to conform to theory or else denied, we might as well be in a madman's world. The attempt to eliminate every vestige of the miraculous in Christ and the Gospels has gone far enough to make clear the meaning, the genius of the whole movement. Without producing a solitary established fact of his-

tory opposing the truth of the two accounts of the Virgin Birth, objectors can but tell us what they suppose happened, not because historical record says so, but because their theories require it to be so.

The anti-supernatural wish is father to all the thought that opposes the story of the Miraculous Conception. And the evolutionary wish is its mother. From the womb of wishes many children of fiction come, but never a child of historical fact. The naturalistic wish to discredit the Virgin Birth is like the prayer of the little girl that Athens might be the capital of Turkey, because she had written it that way in her examination paper.

II

The Inspiration of the Scriptures in this vital matter of setting forth the nature and person of Christ being at stake, no reliability of them worth anything would be left, if lost out here. In short, it is not the loss of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth which is at stake, but the loss of all doctrines based on the revelation of Holy Writ. The real issue here is the reliability of the revelation in the Word of God. In fact it has been openly stated that it is the folly of attempting to prove things from the Bible which is responsible for this controversy; and that this folly will have to go.

It is well that the authority of the Scriptures has been established for centuries. Religion can no more do without authority than can the state. The superintending will is essential even in heaven. There are two complementary phases of all true religion. Authority is the static. Freedom of growth is the progressive. There is a necessary balance to be maintained between these two. We have religions practically all static, rigid, compulsory; and we have other religions practically all flux, voluntary, tumorous or liberal. Neither of these is normal. Progress depends

upon the static remaining so. And the value of the static depends on its service to growth.

A large portion of Protestantism is decadent because it is freedom gone to seed, as its evil harvests show. Even its worship of God is not static, obligatory, dependable, or constrained from within or without; but optional, unsacrificial, a matter of convenience, of whim, of social agreeableness. God is no authority on when or how he is to be worshipped. He must take what He gets, or do without. Worship is mostly hearing preaching—rather, listening to it listlessly or otherwise.

Throughout the whole of such church services the so-called worshipper exercises little or no sense of reverence, and may not have a solitary moment of conscious communion with God. But he fiercely resents any interference, for is it not his privilege to worship God as he pleases? even when pleasing to offer the unresponsive vacuity, the irresponsible, intermittent, undevout, desultory observance of worshipless worship? The average Protestant estimate of the worship of God is based on the amount of entertainment the audience receives from sermon or singing. God has no right even to say what He wants in worship, or what pleases Him. So this Modernist worshipper worships God by attempting to

"Snatch from His hand the sceptre and the rod,
Rejudge His judgments and be the god of God."

That which has destroyed the static or authoritative element in the worship of God is now bent on doing the same with the Word of God. The authority of Jesus Christ is inseparably interwoven with that of the Scriptures, because of their nature as a work of the Holy Spirit portraying Him, revealing His Redemption and relating His word and will to worship. That which undermines confidence in the Bible, undermines confidence in the Holy Spirit, and would

make impossible in this way obedience to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and destroy service to Him as King.

The whimsical, variant, subjective response of the religious consciousness is more bent on asserting its own liberty than any loyalty to the Master. It acknowledges no inspiration but its own. As many have long since ceased to offer real worship to God, so many have long since ceased to regard the Bible as the authoritative Word of God. And the result of this disintegration is the disruption of the service the Word of God directs.

We cannot reject the Holy Spirit's authoritative revelation of the infinitely important matter of who Jesus Christ is, how He came, the nature of His person and place, without undermining faith in the reliability of the Scriptures in our personal relation to God. If the Holy Spirit's generic relation called inspiration failed to secure a trustworthy account of the birth and nature of the Son of God, then the Virgin Birth narratives are not really the result of inspiration.

If inspiration had not sufficient influence or control to prevent Matthew and Luke from relating untruth as truth in such an important and vital matter, it loses the very element that makes inspiration inspiration. This means that faith in the reliability of the Bible on vital matters is shattered, and the battle of Naturalism is won.

Jesus Himself said, "The Scripture cannot be broken." He there used the generic term which includes all inspired writings. Archeologists say that few ancient writings approach the Bible in reliability, and they, of course, refer to matters which have little or nothing to do with the reliability of the Bible as an authority on God's relation to man and of man's to God. The New Testament is not less inspired than the Old. This even enemies must assent to. Then

the New Testament cannot be broken without smashing the static stronghold of Christ's authority which is really like Himself, "the same yesterday, today, yea and forever."

Not long ago it was thought that Luke was in error historically about Quirinius being governor at the time of Christ's birth, for his term of office was known to date earlier. So scoffers at inspiration gleefully pointed to this mistake, and some back-number ones are still doing this. In the present century evidence has been dug up that Luke was quite accurate, for Quirinius was governor *a second time*. Surely then in the far more important matter of the method of the Incarnation the Spirit of God guided Matthew and Luke to sources of truth, having the advantage that they lived at the time when this great event took place. The burden of proof that they were not so guided, rests upon the objectors. So far they have offered none, for conjecture is as far from proof as a guinea-pig is from gold. When we have accepted these two evangelists as trustworthy in recording the teachings of Christ, let us remember they were the same trustworthy men in relating the circumstances and nature of His birth.

III

The argument from congruity offers support to faith in these narratives. A supernatural conception is congruous with the birth of a supernatural person. Jesus Christ is the unique manifestation of the supernatural in the realm of the natural. That His Incarnation should uniquely combine natural and supernatural means, seems appropriate. The miracle of the Virgin Birth is in keeping with the miraculous nature of His person.

There is the matter of sufficiency as well as of congruity, or rather of congruity in divine sufficiency. Only supernatural means of incarnation seem suffi-

cient for the entrance of a divine, preëxistent person. As Moffatt translates Luke's account:

"How can this be?" said Mary to the angel, "I have no husband." The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, the power of the Most High will overshadow you; thus what is born will be called holy, Son of God."

There is also the congruity of the Virgin Birth story with the whole chain of natural and supernatural happenings and circumstances connected with the Advent. It fits in best with the Annunciation, the psalm of Elizabeth, the hymn of Mary, the song of the angels, the visit of the shepherds, the appearance of the wise men from the East and the moving star they followed, the adoration of Simeon and Anna in the Temple, Herod's attempt to kill the Prophetic Babe by a general massacre of children, the flight into Egypt, the return into obscurity when abode in that little out-of-the-way place was selected. All this commotion, to say nothing of the much longer chain of extraordinary events in our Lord's eventful ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, is far more congruous with the Virgin Birth than with an ordinary birth. This preserves the unity in Christ's life in its supernatural aspect. It had its supernatural annunciation, miraculous beginning, its ministry of miracles, its supernatural resurrection and ascension, and last of all its supernatural announcement where He had gone and how He would return.

IV

Paul's doctrine of the Kenosis has weight in supporting the doctrine of the Miraculous Conception.* This is based on the revelation of the personal pre-

*Kenosis is the Greek word which Paul used in describing the act of Christ in "emptying himself" of His infinite powers and heavenly glory out of place or too great to be used in the finite limitations and local form of the human life into which He came.

existence of Christ. In the nature of the case such must be wholly a matter of divine revelation. Whenever in the New Testament mention is made of it, God is represented as sending His Son into the world. There is no hint of the thought that He came into existence at the time of the Advent, which would be indeed no longer an Advent, if He had no personal preëxistence. According to the naturalistic view which denies this preëxistence, God did not so much love the world and give His only begotten Son, as obtain Him. And in this case He was not "the only begotten" in any real sense, but the doubly begotten of a human and a divine father. One is forced to conclude that Incarnation means Incarnation only when there is a preëxistent person to be incarnated.

In his Kenosis, as Paul terms it, the Eternal Son dropped for the time being the exercise of certain powers and attributes, but He remained Himself. He who lays these aside, is not Himself laid aside. The essential elements of His personality remained. He was still God the Son in holy will, divine desire, righteous purpose, and immaculate love. The infinity of powers not needed or suited within the narrow scope of a human life, He laid aside. Jesus himself taught this doctrine before Paul did. He referred more than once to His personal preëxistence. Concerning His Kenosis he said: "And now, Father, glorify me with Thine own self with the glory I had with Thee before the world was." "What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where He was before."

Jesus is justly called "the Second Adam." This means that He was a fresh beginning of the human race, and from Him by spiritual birth all the new humanity is begotten. Thus He Himself was more than a descendant; He became the head of the new humanity of the redeemed. Being born of a virgin and without human father it is appropriate that He should be so described.

V

There is also the argument both psychological and biological in support of this doctrine. First, there is the fact that our souls as well as our bodies come from our parents. The psychical nature of a child shows quite as many marks of being begotten by its parents as its body shows. The inheritance does not stop there. Personality is begotten, part of which is body and soul. The rest is spirit.

If any instance of parents' begetting did not result in the production of a personality, it would be a far greater exception to the biological law of human inheritance than the Virgin Birth itself. The latter rightly considered is not an exception to this law of inheritance, but illustrates it in an exceptional instance and way.

According to biological law each type of life produces after its own kind. When it is possible for two types to unite in offspring, in the latter the natures of both unite. The Virgin Birth unites in offspring the divine and the human, the natural and the supernatural. How impossible are both the incarnation of a preëxistent person and at the same time the begetting in this incarnation by a human father, may be seen when we remember that *never has a human father and mother begotten that a new personality was not originated*. What else is it possible for them to become parents of?

The Miraculous Conception was true to the law of inheritance from both its natural and supernatural factors. The incarnation of a divine person in a human person begotten by human parents means two personalities for one person. Biologically it is impossible to hold that the son of Mary and a human father was one and the same as the Eternal Son of God. We are compelled to take the position: either there was no preëxistent Son of God, or there was no son of a human father when Jesus was born. If

God the Son had always existed before the Incarnation, who is this second person, the son of Mary and a human father? We cannot go back to the old Nestorian interpretation that Christ had two persons, for that explanation is psychologically impossible.

How then can we escape from either denying a human father in the Incarnation or else accepting the prodigy of double personality, dual consciousness, and other similar psychological impossibilities? Once we turn aside from believing the Biblical account of the Miraculous Conception there is no logical, biological, or psychological stopping place short of the quagmire of dual personality in Jesus Christ—unless indeed we seek to escape by jumping into the equally fatal chasm of an outright denial of His preëxistence and Deity.

VI

There is also the argument drawn from the Deity of Christ and the Trinity. We have seen that the natures of the two parent lives which united by conception in the embryo determine the nature or natures of that begotten by them. Only that begotten by both the divine and the human can be accounted generically divine and human.

We need to remember that primarily the Incarnation was a union, not so much of divine spirit and human body as of two spiritual natures, divine and human. While the divine life took up its residence in a human body, this was possible because of its union with the soul within the body and manifested by it. Therefore the union was primarily of these two spiritual natures which took place at the moment of conception.

Mary and Joseph had several children after the birth of Jesus. If the Virgin Birth were not true, James, Joses, Judas, Simon, and their sisters were generically the same in personality as Jesus. It is

the combined human and divine parentage of our Lord which settles forever the status of His person. With a human father He would be generically the same as all of us, and leaving us with no more reason to hold to His personal Deity, than to the personal deity of us all.

At the point of deepest mystery in the beginning of human life, that is in conception, Deity and humanity became equally foundational in the incarnate personality of the Lord. The Scriptures tell us that in the process of this miraculous insemination the Father was the Source, the Son the Substance, and the Holy Spirit the Agent. This is the epigenetic mystery of the Incarnation, not an attempted explanation of the unexplainable or super-explainable, but far better than the barren denial of it all.

The Trinity is a doctrine which chooses Christians to believe in it, rather than that they choose it. Its acceptance is compelled by the superhuman powers, work, and person of Jesus Christ. So we naturally conclude that He and His birth correspond with each other, and that the means of His entrance upon human life of necessity differed from ours by as much as He differs in person, work, place, and power from us.

From all this we have here linked together this strong chain of reasoning—either Christ came by supernatural conception of the divine with the human, or He was not a supernatural person; if He is not a supernatural person, there is no second person in the Trinity; and if there is no second person in it, there is no Trinity. Break this chain anywhere, and any one of the rest of its severed links is of no value. But what biologist or logician can break it? for the Holy spirit is the first Biologist, and Revelation the finest logic.

VII

Lastly, there is the argument from Redemption. We have been told by an eminent English theologian that so far as Salvation and Atonement in Christ are concerned, it does not matter what view of the Incarnation we take. But it does matter very much, and unmistakably so; for we cannot bar out the infinite value which comes from the Supernatural being foundational in Christ's Person, and admit it in His Atonement. The less we see of Christ's Deity in his sacrificial Birth, the less of it must we see in His atoning death.

The view which Christians take of the Incarnation is unspeakably important, because it is bound to affect mightily their whole view of divine redemption from sin. If Jesus were born of two sinful parents, He inherited their sinful nature with no other inheritance to counteract it. If He were as sinful by nature as we are, Salvation and Atonement in Him must go to the winds.

Atonement means Atonement only as Incarnation means Incarnation. When we lose the supernatural in Christ, we lose Him as Redeemer. When we lose the miraculous in the Saviour's birth, we lose the divine in His death. When we lose the historic Christ of the Gospels and His Virgin Birth as therein recorded, not a ghost of the divine remains for our redemption.

In conclusion, while we deprecate personal comparisons, yet choice between the holy men of old who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and those who today claim higher, holier and more reliable inspiration is unescapably forced upon us. The latter surely need very much higher and better inspiration to overcome the handicap of being two thousand years further away from the facts.

As to the Virgin Birth Modernists usually go further, and deny that it was God the Holy Ghost who

inspired Matthew and Luke to write the accounts of it. But these were men who looked into the eyes of Jesus Christ, performed miracles by His power, beheld the Risen Lord, felt His divine breath on their faces when He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," passed through Pentecost and thereafter proclaimed the Gospel in the triumphant power of the Spirit, and true to Him through all the trials and the persecutions at last laid down their lives for Him. It is extremely difficult to believe that such men were less trustworthy and less inspired than contradicting critics of today. Why had the Holy Spirit to wait two thousand years to find men willing to tell the truth on this all-important matter, about which the very disciples, apostles, and martyrs failed so miserably to relate the facts?

Is it not possible for men to mistake the intoxicated self-sufficiency of inflated intellectual pride for the sufficiency of the Spirit of God? When studying this marvelous "mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh," when the Eternal Son became the Son of the Virgin, we should realize that intellectual arrogance is as out of place as the devil would be perched on the Cross of Christ. Again, let it be said, the mood-mark which comes from possessing the Spirit of God is *HUMILITY*. And who can really pray without humility? Then let us humbly pray: "O God, help me recognize the teachings of Thy Spirit about the Birth of our Lord, and the trustworthiness of Thy servants used to hand down to us the message of his Incarnation and our Redemption. O Thou who 'didst not despise the Virgin's womb,' may I never despise Thy Virgin Birth!"

Two things are sorely needed to bring us all together through the Holy Spirit's appraisal of the Bible, namely acquaintance with its Author and love for Him. Pardon a personal illustration. The writings and printed sermons of Dr. John Henry Jowett

failed to take hold on me or leave with me an abiding thought till I heard him speak in the power of the Holy Spirit in his own pulpit in New York. After meeting personally with him I could then translate all his writings into that spiritual presence, and profit much by them, and hunger for more.

If we were all better acquainted with the Author of Holy Writ through His Holy Spirit's presence, what a change it would make in our appreciation of it! The story is told of a young woman laying aside as uninteresting a book given her. Meeting the author and falling in love with him, she went home to peruse the pages of his book with intensest interest. She had no desire to contradict anything in it. Surely, if in return for His great love for us, we come to know and love the Author of the Scriptures, we shall neither contradict their testimony on the Virgin Birth, nor fail to be most intensely interested in their revelation of that Redemption by Sacrificial Love and Death, to which His birth led the way.

"I love the volume of thy Word;
What light and joy its leaves afford
To souls benighted and distress'd!
Thy precepts guide my doubtful way;
Thy fear forbids my feet to stray;
Thy promise leads my heart to rest."

CHAPTER IX

THE SUPERNATURAL

WHAT has Christianity to do with the supernatural? Everything, for it lives by it and dies without it. Naturalism is living by Nature. Christianity is living by God in Christ. Naturalism is attempting to extract life from something God has made, by wresting it out of His hands and purposes and desires. If man were not the summit of the natural, and made to live by the supernatural, he would never try to play god in Nature, act as though he had made it, and was the end of it in himself. Nature is man's greatest temptation, sometimes his very idol, sometimes his super-slave. It may be also his greatest victory; but this must be through the help of Him who is the Victory-Giver.

Man's victory over Nature begins with victory over it in himself. It begins there or nowhere. Self-sufficiency must first be overcome. Through Christ our nature is re-won to God; God is thus enthroned over it.

Because Christ is essential to Christianity, the Supernatural is. In Christianity man and the Supernatural meet and become part of each other forever, to pass from triumph to triumph, till the final triumph when all will be fully subdued to God, "that God may be all in all."

I

We may dispense with the Supernatural only when we can dispense with God. Christianity cannot do without it, for Christianity is essentially a religion of the Supernatural. The two are inextricably intertwined.

No doctrine of Christianity expresses the Supernatural on so large a scale as does the Incarnation. In it as nowhere else does the whole question of the Supernatural arise with more tremendous consequences to Christianity. The Incarnation is the Miracle of all miracles, for it made possible the next most important miracle, the sinless life of Christ, and the next to this—that of the Christian life. That to the Supernatural we owe the Christian life, Bailey witnesses when he says: "Every believer is God's miracle."

Being supreme among the essentials of Christianity the Supernatural could not fail to be the most prominent characteristic in it. To smooth down all its supernatural facts to the dead level of Naturalism is to make Christianity unrecognizable. When its facts of miracle are repudiated its marvelous power is gone. History bears this out. Just because it is intrinsically a religion of the Supernatural, it has never done other than die down and fade out when exclusive faith in the natural has come in.

If instead of tinkering with the essentials of Christianity men would apply its superhuman power to the needs of human life, it would be infinitely better. That is a bad day for Christianity when the theological tinker replaces the true prophet, for the latter has the vision of the need as it is in man, and of the remedy as it is in God. It is a tremendous price to pay, and little or nothing to gain when, for the approval of a few intellectuals, the essential element of the miraculous in Christianity is abandoned. A prince among the prophets of America has well expressed his thought on this matter:

"In the first place Christianity is a religion of the supernatural and, to anyone thoroughly in its power, it must bring the presence of a live supernaturalism, and make that the atmosphere of his life. You cannot bring Christ's religion down and make it a thing

of this world. The first truth of the Incarnation is the controlling truth of the Christian faith. Behind, before all knowledge of why Christ came into the world, what he came to do, there must always be the fact that he did come, and that the wall between the two worlds was broken, the gulf between God and man was bridged, and that to the soul of every mortal who saw Christ, the spiritual world with all its standards and impulses became visible and powerful. Other religions you may bring down to mere codes of worldly wisdom. Christianity is supernatural or it is nothing.”*

II

The question whether we believe in the supernatural is the same as whether we believe in the Christianity of Christ and the Gospels. De-supernaturalize it and you devitalize and destroy it. Take away the supernatural and it is a system without a soul, a form without its life, and even the form crumbling because without meaning, once the supernatural in which it expressed faith, is gone. It is well to remember that the highest in Naturalism is infinitely lower than the lowest in Christianity. Do we believe in God in Christ? Then we believe in the supernatural as the very heart of Christianity.

God is the substance and source of the supernatural because He is a person. De-personalize God and you have sub-personalized Him, made Him less than man. His personality gives meaning to the whole supernatural realm. Faith in either alone, divine personality or the supernatural, tends to be lost, for the one always gives meaning to the other. The supernatural is made sub-natural without the personality of God.

By the Incarnation God came personally into the natural realm to belong to it. He brought with Him the resources of divine personality which are back of all the natural realm. The great purpose of Jesus

*Phillips Brooks, *Sermons*, p. 185.

Christ's coming was that His infinite supernatural resources might be brought to the relief of human need.

The supernatural made us in its own image and likeness. In this man differs from all the rest of Nature. Because of it he has affinity with the supernatural and capacity to recognize it and enter into active relations with it. As Jean Ingelow, in the *Story of Doom*, says: "Man is the miracle in Nature. God is the One Miracle to man." But from God's point of view there is no miracle, no supernatural.

The supernatural and uncreated in Christ makes the natural and created in Him of such vast value. He said, "I came forth from God." He was the supernatural miraculously entering into human life. The bedrock of our faith in Him and what He can do for us lies in the supernatural quality of His person and power. There we find a foundation for our faith which can never crumble. Goethe says, "The dearest child of faith is miracle." Rather the dearest child of miracle is faith. And the surest source of saving faith is the supernatural.

Nothing more clearly proclaims the supernatural place and power of Jesus Christ than His giving the Holy Spirit, for only the supernatural can impart the supernatural, only God can give the Spirit of God. When this takes place we are as truly given to the Holy Spirit as He is to us. In Him we experience the supernatural in vital contact with us. Through His indwelling presence we have fellowship with the Supernatural at work in human life, moulding the Christian soul.

God and Nature are never at odds. God and sin are opposed to each other, and so much so they could not be more so. Sin is an intrusion in, not a part of Nature. To represent the supernatural as contrary to Nature is to misrepresent God in Nature. God in Nature is no reason for denying Him beyond it. And

recognizing Him beyond it is no reason for denying Him in Nature.

Christianity is the largest manifestation of God in Nature. The *criteria* of the Christian faith are for this reason largely made up of supernatural facts. These, Naturalism is ever seeking to explain away. It is an impossible task. God cannot be explained away when in Christ He has come in to stay. As some one has said: "Supernatural facts are not gotten rid of by naturalistic explanations without foundation in fact."

The more God finds us, the more must we rejoice to find Him anywhere. We cannot discover too much of God in Nature or beyond it, unless we are unwilling to translate what we find into love's constraint to work and to worship. Discovery of the Divine stops when either of these does. Finding God in the natural in gréater measure naturally follows finding Him in the supernatural. Christianity might be defined as the art of finding God, if it were not in fact the art of God finding us. It might also be defined as successfully living in two worlds at the same time; or living in the natural by the supernatural. This means finding God in both. Here even superstition is better than skepticism. As Brooks says:

"It is better after all to be so superstitious that we find God where He is not, than to be so skeptical that we do not find Him where He is."

III

Naturalism may take many forms. It may be diluted in many ways and in varying degrees. But at heart it always means Nature without God, Nature replacing God. Sometimes it would exclude Him altogether; and sometimes include Him altogether. By it He is sometimes completely ignored; and at other times represented as tied up and bound down by His own laws, imprisoned by His own work. It is the old-

est foe of God, the oftenest recurring, and the most inveterate.

While there is no room in the universe for another than the true God, there is not room enough in all of it for all of God to manifest Himself. Nature is a visible and external manifestation of God, even as the human body is a visible and external manifestation of man's soul. But all the human soul is never manifested through its body; so all of God is not manifested in Nature. He did not exhaust His power of self-manifestation when He created Nature. His personality, for example, is not a revelation of Nature.

If God could not come into this world to manifest Himself personally, it would mean either that He had no personality to manifest, or that He had built himself out of Nature. There is no good reason why God should so frame this world as to debar Himself from interposing in it in a personal way, when occasion should arise needing Him so to do. This miraculous interposition is possible because God is a person and can act in His own world as He sees fit. Nature does not rule over Him and say: "Thus far shalt thou come, and no further."

There is no need to interpret divine intervention as disrespect to natural law, as though natural law were more important than God Himself. Nature is not more sacred than the Most High. That God must regard natural law as a sacrosanct, "touch-me-not" affair, is ludicrous. Who has decided that intervention is always desecration? And why?

A traveller passing from the Pacific to the Atlantic winds his watch regularly, and at certain points along the way sets it ahead an hour. It never occurs to him that this may be undue interference with the sanctity of the regular order in which his watch works. The fact that the hands regularly move by the energy stored up in the mainspring, is not taken as a reason prohibiting him from setting the hands where he will.

The watch was made to allow for this interposition, for the maker of it knew that such intervention would be needed. In either case the power of the owner moves the hands. In setting forward the hands this power is applied directly, instead of being mediated through the mainspring, in which it is stored up.

Somewhat in the same way the miracle occurs in Nature. God made the world so that, when He wished, He could apply directly His unmediated, personal power. The same power that rolls the planets along their orbits, mediated through the energy of natural force, may interpose at any point in a direct way. Who is there to legislate that God may not so interpose in His own world when He wishes? Who is to decide that He must invariably do the same thing and work in precisely the same way in Nature forever? Surely God as fully owns His world as the man his watch, and can have as much freedom with its mechanism as the traveller with his timepiece.

We have here used the term Supernatural as applied to the Uncreated. Of course there is also the created in the Supernatural, both good and bad, but not created bad, as with the angels. Then, too, the Supernatural and the miraculous do not always mean the same thing. The Supernatural does not become the miraculous until it intervenes in the natural in a special way. Such intervention does not suspend natural law. This law goes on as before; only its results are affected.

Communion with the Supernatural by prayer is not a miracle, for it does not interpose in the working of natural law; but the answer to prayer might be a miracle. Regeneration is a miracle, as the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit brings it to pass in man in Nature.

The Naturalistic claim, threadbare, time-worn, worn out and newly rewoven in its shoddy innumerable times, that the miracle contradicts and suspends

natural law, has been answered often enough to test out the perseverance of both saints and sinners. Still every new convert to Naturalism, even though he be as eminent as Sanday, uses it anew with as much assurance as if it had not been effectually answered a thousand times.

Returning to our illustration of the watch, what law of watches or of their working did the owner contradict and suspend when he set the hands ahead? The timekeeping function of the watch was not suspended; it was helped. And the watch did not stop while he moved the hands. It went on the same as ever. In no way did he contradict the law of its working. He was controlling not contradicting, supplementing not suspending.

What Nature cannot do, God does by direct supernatural power. Nature does not stop. No law is suspended. The miracle does not contradict that which it supplements. *Super* never means *anti*; the Supernatural is not anti-natural. Why should it be thought that every divine intervention in Nature must be hostile or necessarily contradicting?

Certainly originality has not been overstrained in this Jack-in-the-box, bob-up-again, repetitious old fallacy that only a contrary spirit and power can intervene in this world, and that everything done more than Nature can do, contradicts it. Then a man contradicts his child and suspends the law of its activity when he lifts it up on his shoulders. Would not the contradiction to both his and the child's nature be *not* to do this? That is what the father is for—to do more for the child than the child can do for himself. That is what God is for—to do for His children in Nature that which neither they themselves nor Nature can do for them. Would not a refusal to supplement be a contradiction to the relation He bears to Nature? Supernatural consent to help by intervention in Nature may be called unnatural contradic-

tion; but calling it so, does not make it so. Perversity is not logic. It is silly not syllogistic.

When Jesus in His first miracle turned the water into wine, He did not stop grapes from growing, the winepress from working, grape juice from fermenting. When later He walked on the water one stormy night, He did not contradict nor suspend the law of gravitation. His body weighed as much as it ever did, and the water held up as much weight as it ever could. The supplementing supernatural force which held His body above the seething waters, neither displaced nor put out of commission the natural force which pulled it downward. The miracle of the counter-equivalent supernatural energy which balanced this downward pull, no more suspended the law of gravitation than the centrifugal force of the planets suspends the centripetal—which is the force of gravity over again.

In this connection we should remember that a law of nature is not force, but the way force acts, the regularity of the order of its working. It is not the movement of natural energy, but the uniformity of it. The miracle does not suspend the regular way in which nature acts, nor does it contradict that way. *The miracle is the way of the Supernatural.* The law or the way in which Nature always works is not suspended when for the moment a higher force is at work within it. To ^{super}vene is not to suspend. Then too, it is well to remember also that law is not peculiar to the natural world. The supernatural is as much a world of law as the natural, for all natural law came from it, and is supported by it.

IV

Because the supernatural is the source and support of natural law, it never intervenes in a freakish way. To hold that the miracles which Christ performed were the intrusion of freaks, is to question

His wisdom and Deity. There was nothing freakish in handing back to the widowed mother her dead boy restored to life. To call the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Christ Himself from the dead freaks, is nothing short of sheer blasphemy. He who made all the laws of Nature can be trusted to interpose in a way that is not lawless or freakish.

The Supernatural, when it refers to God in person, is not something unnatural. The source of Nature could hardly be unnatural; and as long as the Supernatural is the hope of the natural fulfilling itself, its miracle in Nature cannot be fairly called unnatural. God is superhuman; but this does not mean that He is inhuman. He is Supernatural, not unnatural. Summing up, we may then say that the relation of the Divine and Supernatural to the natural is never to contradict, suspend, or destroy, but to establish, save, and sanctify.

Turning back for a moment to the great miracle of the Incarnation, which is, so assailed today, it may be remarked that it did not result in the production of an unnatural, freakish man, or any contradiction or suspension of human nature. Jesus was the most natural human being who ever lived. He was most human, though Divine. In a world where men had lost the spirit of sonship natural to them, it was not unnatural that God should send His only begotten Son, thereby interposing to restore the lost spirit of sonship. Then God contradicted, not the laws of nature, but the lawlessness of sin; for sin is the absolutely unnatural thing, the one and only unnatural thing in the universe. And the Great Miracle to destroy the unnaturalness of sin is not itself a sin against Nature.

The Miracle of Redemption is none other than the love of God sacrificing its holy offering to restore man to right relations to Him, when sin had interrupted them. The circumstances called for divine interposi-

tion. Otherwise man would be lost forever. Not to have interposed would have been supremely unnatural for God. It would have suspended the law of His gracious nature which yearned infinitely to intervene on behalf of man. Then there ought never to be a man on earth who did not rejoice and glorify God for this, instead of accusing it of being undue interference with natural law. Oh pshaw! Can this be love of law accusing unlawfully? The devil is the first anti-miraculist who opposed this divine intervention, though he had done his full part to make it necessary. Blessed be God! He could miraculously intervene, for He had not shut himself up in a prison house of natural law.

The situation was such that all the powers of Nature could not save man nor atone for his sin. What the natural could not do in that it was weak, the supernatural did. It was perfectly natural that it should. It was fitting that He who was the Great Miracle in personality, should perform miracles. He never struggled while performing them, but acted with the utmost ease, so characteristic of the supernatural. He showed no self-congratulation that He had succeeded in performing them. Everywhere and always He was an illustration of the perfect poise of naturalness.

One thing natural law could do for man in his unredeemed state—mete out to Him the results of his sin. With God the end of Nature was not to punish man for iniquity. God desired something far more than that natural law should be uninterrupted in administering penalty to sinners. So He interposes, not because He loves Nature the less, but man the more.

God made natural law. Natural law did not make God. Natural law was made for man, not man for natural law. Because God is the Creator of man, the miracle in His favor is free to happen. In the Redemption of Christ it has happened and established

its own law, that higher than natural law, the law of the grace of the heart of God. It took the supernatural to make man; and it required no less to redeem him. After all the miracle of man's redemption is no more strange than the miracle of his creation. As Young says, in his *Night Thoughts* about immortality:

"Still seems it strange that thou shouldst live forever?

Is it less strange that thou shouldst live at all?

This is a miracle; and that no more."

In concluding this chapter the author wishes to point out the futility of the oft repeated plea that Modernism restates Christianity in the language of today and divested of the outworn terms of the past. What it really does is to emasculate Christianity. It restates it without its essential, vital, supernatural facts. Cutting off a man's head on the plea that he is thereby presented in a new and interesting way, is to excuse murder for its novelty of sensation and presentation. So Modernism is the murder of Christian faith in the supernatural facts of Christianity. But it does not stop there. It would make a virtue out of its crime and commend this as the art of up-to-date expression. *O tempora! O mores!*

CHAPTER X

DIVINE AND HUMAN NATURES

JESUS CHRIST'S work of saving the world reveals the nature of His person. The greater this work of salvation, the greater must be the Saviour who does it. The proportions of His person and of His work agree. To this we must agree.

Without controversy great is the mystery of "the man Christ Jesus," who with the power of God turned the stream of human events in a new direction, and wrought that in human lives which has made the Christian centuries inexplicable apart from Him. Recently President Horr of Newton Theological Seminary in an address to ministers said: "I can find no line of cleavage between Christ and God, where the one begins and the other ends."

In the life of Jesus Christ we find abundant evidence of an unrivalled and unique fulness of God. For this reason we may most own or disown God in the place we assign to Him. If we fail to recognize God in Christ, we must of necessity fail to recognize the place of Christ.

Manifestly the inquiry Who Jesus Christ is, has no rival in importance. He is too great to be ignored by anybody. Account for Him we must. As long as time lasts the fateful question will not down: What of God in the Son of God?

I

Two opposing views of our Lord's Person have come down to us—one that He is man, the other that He is more than man. Some regard Him as merely the master-teacher of religion, while others hold that He is God manifest in person. Here, then, are two

totally contrary views of His nature—a man among men, nothing more; God come in the flesh, nothing less.

Those who take the last named view, do not deny the human nature of Christ. That He is “the Son of Man,” is as strongly asserted in their faith as in the faith of any. According to the other view “the Galilean Prophet” is not Deity. He is a son of God, only as all men are sons of God. He is not Son of God in the unique sense. Those holding the other view declare that not to look upon Him as God the Son in the unique sense would rob Him of His place as Redeemer of the world.

II

Not always is the issue thus sharply drawn. A preacher out West was accused of unbelief in the Deity of Christ. He hotly denied the charge. Whereupon the editor of a Unitarian paper claimed that this preacher was “in entire accord with the position occupied by most Unitarians,” and substantiated his editorial with the following summary of this preacher’s views written by himself:

“He (Jesus Christ) was a Jewish teacher and prophet—the flower of His race, the consummate type of manhood, so human that He was divine, and the Saviour through reconciling men to God, but not in reconciling a God who needed no reconciliation to mankind.”

This minister’s summary of his own faith went on to deny the supernatural in Christ’s Incarnation. The noteworthy expression in it—“so human that He was divine,” illustrates the usual Modernist effort to blur the distinction between divinity and humanity.

Pantheism has attempted to take away all distinction between the natural and the supernatural, saying that “God is all and all is God.” In a similar way the difficulty of Christ’s two-fold nature disap-

pears, if we decide that the humanity of man is the same as the divinity of God. Let us then no longer speak of "the divinity that stirs within us." We are divinity! Divinity stirs when we do! Moreover we were not made in the image of God. We are god. Not likeness to the Most High, but identity with Him is ours; for God is human and man is divine.

This is all very different from the language and thought of Scripture. We recall that God once said: "Thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself." Hosea reported Jehovah as uttering this: "I am God and not man." It is plain that the source of this effort to blot out the distinction between human and divine natures is philosophical and not Biblical. And the stone of philosophy has always proved rather a poor substitute for the bread of Revelation.

III

Philosophy presents two extremes of thought, each equally disastrous, so far as Christianity is concerned. And these extremes meet. When Pantheism says, "All is God," and Atheism says, "There is no God," the situation is the same. When everything is god, God is nowhere and nothing. From either point of view true religion is impossible. When all is God, the most a man can do is to pray to and worship himself. But self-worship is religious insanity. As well search in one's own body for the center of the solar system.

The Psalmist sang: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Surely no wiser is he who affirms in his philosophy, "All is God." When there is either no one at all to worship, or no one higher than ourselves, true worship is impossible. And religion without worship is like water that is not wet. It has turned to ice. This frigid religion of philosophy may do for an ecclesiastical refrigerator. It may chill that

begun to spoil, but it can never cheer, comfort or inspire the human heart.

In almost every error there is some grain of truth. The truth here is that God and man are identified with each other, but are not identical. Ever since the far off days of Xenophanes some have confounded identification with identity. The material of which a coin is made, the image on it, and the maker are identified with each other, but are not identical. So man in the coinage of Creation, stamped out in the image of his Maker, is identified with Him, but is not identical with Him.

Some have differentiated between God and man as the finitely infinite and the Infinitely Infinite. This sounds a bit like Spinoza. The defect in it is that it is *a quantitative distinction for the qualitative*. The Scriptural way of distinguishing between created and uncreated substance, is in every way better. Blot out creation, and you blot out God. Grant creation, and you have two which never can be identical, the uncreated divine, and the created human.

Failure to distinguish between God the Creator and that which He has called into being, is the mother of many a false religion; and founded on this failure it builds many mud huts of turbid thinking. When a man fails to make this foundational distinction, it does not matter what other distinctions he may make thereafter. No structure of religious thought can be strong enough to stand the storms and floods of time, if built upon the quicksands of philosophic thought, rather than upon the bedrock of revelation of the mind of God.

IV

In Christian thought God and man can never be identical, for in it God is holy, man a sinner, and sin godlessness. Iniquity is essentially what God is not. We are forced to deny either our sin or that we are

deity, for to assert the one is to repudiate the other. Sorry deities of a day are we—sinning and dying, slaying and being slain. What gods the Turks must seem to the Armenians!

Some one has said that a sure cure for the malady of believing that man is Divine, is a bath in the mud of pagan social life. We need not go to pagan lands for this remedy. The bath we have had in the mud of the trenches of the most murderous war in the history of the world, is enough.

Not many of our soldiers in this war took their enemies for deities. Those who think of Deity and humanity as essentially the same, must think that God had quite a fight with Himself in the late war, and in all human wars, for that matter. Said the Master: "But one is good, even God," and the sorry history of human life all the way through says it is largely a failure to be good. Of all the attempted solutions of the world's problem of evil, about the poorest is that which defies human imperfection by asserting the divinity of sinners.

V

To escape from the dilemma caused by holding to sinners' deity some would charge up all man's sinfulness to his animal nature. Declaring that his sinful animal nature is not essential, they believe it will be sloughed off finally. If this be true, one could hope so! But it is an interpretation not founded on fact. We do not sin with our animal nature only. We sin with every power and part of personality.

The explanation that we act in separate fractions of ourselves, has no standing in psychology today. One part of personality cannot act without the rest of it sharing in the act. If in truth we are demi-gods—part animal and part god,—our god-nature must share in our sinning. But sinning divinity is more than a contradiction in terms; it is blasphemy. Even

demi-deity is therefore utterly incompatible with our sinfulness.

Human attempts to reconcile the essentially unreconcilable may go on for many a day to come, but they must forever fail. The two views of Christ's person named early in this chapter cannot be harmonized.

Here we cannot enter upon the arguments by which His Deity is defended or assailed. Volumes would be required to relate all that in full. All that is sought to be shown here is the utter hopelessness of attempting to reconcile Unitarian and Trinitarian beliefs.

The task of re-creating this world by Redemption is even greater, and more difficult than that of creating it in the first place; and cost far more in personal, divine sacrifice. If then a man could not be the Creator of the World, a mere man could not be its Redeemer. Most theological thinkers agree that Redemption and Atonement must always be an impossible doctrine when the Deity of Christ is rejected. As a quaint old hymn puts it:

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of Heaven, and let us in."

CHAPTER XI

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

TWO terms are used to express the nature of the supernatural in Christ, "Divinity" and "Deity." The first of these is sometimes used in a looser and lower sense than the second. We may, with propriety, speak of the divinity of man, but never of his deity. Though not an authority on Christian terminology, Seneca long ago said: "The soul has this proof of its divinity, that divine things delight it." When desirous of not being misunderstood, the term "Deity" is preferable. For this reason it is used more frequently in this book.

Another advantage is that this term more explicitly points to the innate substance in personality, to its essence. The person of Jesus Christ is absolutely unique. Neither in the supernatural or the natural world is there one like unto Him. Because of His Incarnation He combines in His person natures created and uncreated, human and divine. That He cannot be classified, is generally admitted. Two at least are necessary to make a class; and where is there another like Him? We are far from knowing all about Him, for "No one knoweth who the Son is but the Father." But we do know Him as without peer or parallel in human history.

I

The dimensions of Christianity are best measured by the dimensions of the Person who founded it and bounds its horizon. Our appreciation of its power and possibilities is sure to be limited by our estimate of the Christ. On the reality of His Deity hangs all other reality in Christianity and that for all eternity.

This statement is not too strong; but we may be too weak to receive it.

Some years ago the *Expository Times* reviewed the remark of a theologian: "We can no longer hold that the person of Christ has *two natures*." If this be so, the meaning of the Incarnation must be reduced proportionately. Then it was not the personal nature of Deity which was incarnated in Christ, for His human nature is without question. Is not this but a round-about way of saying we can no longer hold to His Deity?

Whether there are two natures in Christ's person, cannot be finally decided by any theological or psychological theory. In the Incarnate One we are dealing with the unique even in Deity as well as in humanity. Theories do not make nor govern facts. They should conform to them. Our theory of His person should harmonize with that which has been revealed of His own thought, His deeds, the reach of Redemption in Him, the range of the powers He exercised, the unsullied purity of His life and character, and all the other facts, which linked together, give us the most important and significant story in all human history.

We need to be a bit humble in mind, rather than proudly denying on a theory any of the facts of Revelation about Christ's person; remembering that all the possibilities of a human personality are as yet far from being within the scope of our observation, let alone the little we know about the possibilities of Deity in person. As already shown in an earlier chapter, what we know of God in person must be revealed by Him. We are not in a position to sit very long in judgment upon what He tells us, or upon what He can tell us. Jesus revealed Himself by the Holy Spirit's Word to the Fathers. Are we so much wiser and more learned than those from whom we have descended, that we refuse to learn as they did

—by Revelation? We may be still descending just when we think we are ascending. Minds never climb very high with unbended knees. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Perhaps there is special reason why this passage is so oft repeated in Holy Writ.

Certainly we are not now in a position to make final pronouncement that two natures are impossible in the person of Christ. He transcends our knowledge of Him a long, long way. Any explanation of His most wondrous person which reduces the measure of its meaning, the scope of its saving power, the range of its possibilities, is singularly inappropriate. Moreover, the Incarnation was not an afterthought; provision and room for it was made when God made man.

What if created and uncreated, human and divine natures seem too far apart to come together in one person? They are not so far apart as the moral and the immoral, the mortal and the immortal, the material and the spiritual, the sinless and the sinful. And all of these have been, and still are, in human personality.

Not less but more of divinity do we see when Christ opens our eyes to look within the unfathomable riches of His person. Skimpy theological theories may demand a Christ with less to Him. They are like tiny, cockleshell, cranky craft, easily swamped or overturned even in calm waters. When we are praying, we cannot find any too much of Deity in the Master, for the more of His greatness we can see, the more may we ask of Him.

"Jesu, let my nature feel
Thou art God unchangeable;
Jah, Jehovah, great I AM,
Speak into my soul thy name."

II

Besides the two views of the nature of Christ, one declaring and the other denying His Deity, there are also two views of His Deity itself. These are the *immanental* and the *personal* views. The first of these holds that His human nature was filled with God, the other holds that He is God manifested in and limited by human nature. The immanental interpretation presents Him as the human taking on the divine; and the personal presents Him as the divine taking on the human. Here then we have two views of Deity, namely, that of infilling and that in full.

There are two well known estimates of the Bible similar to these. One contends that Holy Writ *contains* the Word of God, the other that it *is* the Word of God. As between the two, Deity in indwelling and in inbeing, we are bound to confess that God within a person is less than God in person; for the former is but an associational relation and activity of God, while the latter is Deity in original, eternal, foundational, inherent personality.

Most Modernists seem inclined to the Sabellian view of Christ's Deity. This form of Unitarianism holds that God is one person in three manifestations. But Christ is a Person, and His personality is the highest thing in Him. If He is not an eternal Person of the Godhead, and His personality came into existence at the time of the Incarnation, then the highest in Him, His personality, is not Divine. When the highest in Him is not accounted Deity, His Deity is an empty term, without meaning. I have discussed this more at length in *The Living Atonement* ("The Sabellian Compromise," p. 59).

The immanental view of Christ's divine nature cannot be rightly regarded as personal in the full sense of this term, for the very good and sufficient

reason that this divine immanence belongs to the person of another. It cannot constitute part of His personality and at the same time be part of the personality of another.

According to the immanental view, the relation between the two natures of Christ is that of container and content, the human container and the divine content. The personal view of Christ's Deity does not deny that His human nature was filled with God. According to the personal view the Son was not only Deity *ab origine*, but even before His Incarnation His divine nature ever had indwelling in it the Father and the Holy Spirit.

III

We may recall that Jesus said: "I am in my Father, and my Father in me." A person cannot dwell in himself. If God and man were identical, God could not dwell in man. He could not dwell in Himself. And, if God the Father and the Son were the same person over again in different manifestations of one person, the Father could not dwell in Him. One manifestation does not dwell in another.

The greatest indwelling is possible where there is the greatest room for it, namely, in the greatest persons. And the greatest room for divine immanence is not in man, nor even in the universe, but in the Persons of the Triune Godhead. This infinite inter-immanence of the Three Persons of the Trinity is essential to the very Being of God; and it explains in part the perfect unity of the Trinity. Were this better understood and remembered, the charge which Modernists make that Trinitarianism is tri-theism, would be impossible.

God the Father dwells in the Son and the Holy Spirit to a greater degree and measure than anywhere else. There is also the reciprocal indwelling of the Son and Holy Spirit in the Father in infinite measure.

After His Incarnation the Son had a new capacity for the indwelling of the Father and the Holy Spirit, namely, in His added human nature. So the measureless deeps of His incarnate Person were filled to the full with God; and yet He was God.

IV

We have been distinguishing between the Deity inherent in the person of Christ and the Deity which dwells in Him. In the virile book of an English theologian, intended to help in these uncertain and perplexing days, occurs the statement: "In Christ God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is immanent." This would mean that Jesus Christ is not the incarnation of the Son. If God the Son be immanent in Him, He is not the Son, for He could not be immanent in Himself. Would it not be better to say: *In Christ God as the Father and the Holy Spirit was immanent and as the Son was manifest in person?*

This is a vital point in the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, for no man becomes God through God dwelling in him; and Christ would not be Deity through Deity dwelling in Him. On the other hand He could not be God the Son without the Father and the Holy Spirit dwelling in Him as in no other person on earth.

We should remember that the mission of the Incarnate Christ prevented public manifestation of His Deity such, for example, as took place on the Mount of Transfiguration. Except to each other there cannot be at any time the full and perfect self-manifestation of the persons of the Trinity. Only *there* can no limitation be found to divine self-revelation. "Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." This we would have expected to find, not in Matthew's and Luke's Gospels, but in that of John. The word here used for "know" is the intensified form, "epiginosko"—know fully. Even when the Son reveals (apoka-

lupto—unveils, discloses) the Father, we do not know the Father directly, unmediated as He does. The statement quoted from this apostle is preceded by the parallel statement already quoted: "And no one knoweth the Son, save the Father." *In the light of this how can all our arguments for Christ's Deity be other than incomplete and inadequate?* One here recalls the opening lines of Tennyson's "In Memoriam":

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.

Faith finds too rich results to refuse belief in the Deity of Christ because in the nature of the case it reaches far beyond where our arguments can go. These rich results are exemplified in the rich range of thought associated in the context to this passage. "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father." But one of three kinds of person—impostor, insane, or divine—could say such. We are compelled to class the Christ as one of these three. That strong saying precedes the passage quoted. Following it is one of the richest of the rich in the invitations and the promises of Christ, for Deity has its own richest invitations and promises.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

V

A prominent minister in New York City has lately published his refusal to call Christ God, because "No man hath seen (beheld) God at any time." These words were twice written, namely, in both Gospel and Epistle by John who most of all the New Testament

writers set forth Christ's Deity. In each case he was referring, not to the invisibility of spirit, but to the impossibility of beholding the Love that was and is God *without its manifestation in the Son*. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." On the ground of mere lack of visibility one should refuse to call man a soul for soul is not any more visible than Deity. Is the Deity invisible in substance and person to sinful man any the less Deity when by incarnation it manifests itself in a visible body adapted to sinful man's apprehension? John did not say so. Paul too says:

"For the invisible things of him (God) since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity."

Paul and John agree that God is seen in Christ, for divinity can be seen through its manifestations, even as the soul is seen through its body. Moses endured through "seeing him who is invisible." He "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation," is the invisible God made visible, brought into the world of human vision. His revelation makes possible the doxology: "Now unto the King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever."

For us the Deity of Christ has its fullest evaluation in Redemption. Appreciation of both rises or falls together. *It is either His Deity in full, or no full salvation*. The imparting of the saving power of His Atonement is mediated through His dwelling in those who receive Him. If His divinity was not personal, but only immanental, thereby He would be incapacitated from indwelling in us. The divine immanence which dwells in Him, cannot be re-imparted, re-emanated to us. The indwelling of God in Him could not at the same time be Christ's indwelling in

us. The shadow of a shadow, or the re-emanation of an emanation, will not work. So we conclude that nothing less than full Deity in Christ's person is commensurate with the work of salvation. The sense of proportion, considering these two, must ever be on the side of His Deity in full.

If there is more in a human soul than can be expressed through its body, we need not wonder that there is more Deity in Christ than manifest in His incarnate state. When the whole universe could not fully express the wondrous person of God the Son, much less could a human body and soul. But this we know that He works the work of God in human souls. His Redemption of man is no less than the work of God. If His person is in proportion to His work—and it must be—He is no less than God “manifested in the flesh.” One here recalls the lines of Harry Webb Farrington:

“I know not how that Bethleh'm's Babe
Could in the Godhead be;
I only know the Manger-child
Has brought God's life to me.”

The Deity of Christ is in His personality or it is worthless. Since personality is the deepest and greatest, He must be Deity in it! Otherwise that which is deepest and greatest in Him is not His Deity. Unless He is Deity in the deepest and greatest of His nature, He cannot redeem us at our deepest and greatest.

CHAPTER XII

THE TRINITY

THE first fact of existence is God. The highest conceivable form of existence is personality.

When we differentiate between orders of existence, the personal God is put first. Because personality is essential in the divine Being, it is essential in the likeness of God in man. Perfected human personality is the great goal of Creation and Redemption.

Personality is far above all else in form of existence, for it is the explanation of all things created and uncreated. It alone can explain itself. All else must be explained by it. As first, not only in rank but in time, all things are made for it; and in the personality of the Creator and Redeemer all things hold together in that coherence which makes a universe possible.

I

Man himself is a living argument for the personality of God. In a rational universe we must hold that cause and effect are equal; that is, effect is produced by adequate cause. For example, it takes a fifty-pound force to strike a fifty-pound blow. Now according to this equation or correspondence of cause and effect only a personal Creator could create persons. As Carlyle somewhere says:

"We find it flatly inconceivable that consciousness in man should have come from a source which had none of its own."

The created effect would have been infinitely greater than its creative cause, if an impersonal Creator had created persons. If God were not personal in

nature, man would be vastly His superior. Any existence with the powers of consciousness, moral nature, mind, and love is infinitely higher and greater than an existence without these powers. If God were impersonal He should not be worshipped by man, for worship is for uplift; and for man to worship the impersonal, that less or lower than himself, would drag him down towards its lower level.

II

The theological automobile needs a careful person at the wheel to keep it from being wrecked in the ditch on either side of the road. To use also a more classical illustration, every theological doctrine must sail between Scylla and Charybdis. Our doctrine of God has on one side of its course the rock of impersonality, and on the other the whirlpool of super-personality.

If God cannot be less than personal; also He cannot be more. The super-personal is as impossible as the super-divine. There is no super-vital existence or super-spiritual life. Nor can there be a super-personal God. We might as well believe in the possibility of super-Deity. There can be no better than the best; such super-personality would be.

The greatest light of revelation concerning personality in God shines in the face of the Person of Jesus Christ. He brought within close range new possibilities of man's apprehension of God; but at the same time this light of His life shows up the deformities in sinful man's comprehension of God. In the light of His thought of God we see how little insight, understanding, freedom, and faculty for God man as a sinner has.

Our minds are as feeble and dense in apprehending God's holy nature as our hearts are slow and inert in doing His will. We cannot live crooked and think straight about God or anything else; nor can

we think crooked about Christ and live straight. Our long-continued failure toward God cannot but becloud our minds and harden our hearts and darken all our thoughts concerning Him. The imperfections and deficiencies in ourselves affect the mind and they project themselves in all our thought about divine personality, its perfection and sufficiency; and they embody themselves in some serious misconceptions about the Most High.

Moreover, the perfect is never quite understood by the imperfect, the holy by the unholy, the Infinite by the finite, the Uncreated by the created, the Divine by the human. Never is the insufficiency of the human mind more painful than when God is the object of its thought. Sin is insanity about God; and, to the insane, sanity is insane; for the insane person must think with the mind he has. Could he know he is insane, he would there cease to be insane. So we must think about God with our sin-crippled minds, if we think about Him at all. Until we are holy as He is holy, we shall never think of Him perfectly as He is.

III

The sinlessness of Jesus Christ has been the standing wonder of the ages. And He could not be flawless in character and blameless in life, if He were not equally flawless and blameless in His thought of God. We turn our wonder at His unique, absolute purity to good account when we see Him thereby fitted to be our only authority on the nature and personality of God. He sees clearly where we can hardly distinguish light from darkness, or cannot see at all. His perfect mind is concomitant with His perfect life; while we have neither. Then it would be folly for us to place our thought above His, and to rely on our sin-stained thought, rather than on His.

True, we have made some progress in our think-

ing, but only as we have been at His feet, who was meek and lowly in heart, but high as the heavens in His thought, knowing the Father as He was known of Him. About the nature of the Trinity we may learn much from the Son who instead of prostrating Himself in worship, takes His place in bosom-familiarity with the Father, "counting it not robbery (a prize to be grasped at) to be equal with God."

The coming of the Son of God in the Incarnation coupled with His teaching about Himself brought forth or rather compelled the doctrine of the Trinity. His matchless character, His superhuman power, and His divine works forced man to account for Him in keeping with them. His Person must be judged as in proportion to His deeds; and they manifested His perfect control of supernatural power. No one could work such works as He did, if His trustworthiness was not unimpeachable. We must believe Him for His work's sake. He cannot be improved upon. Shakespeare says, "To gild refined gold, to paint the lily, or add another hue unto the rainbow, were wasteful and ridiculous excess." He is the Gold of God needing neither gilding or refining. He is the Divine Lily in this human valley fairer than ten thousand to all who see His balanced beauty and smell the perfume of His perfect holiness.

Jesus not only spake as never man spake, not only uttered the highest ideal of life man has ever heard; but He embodied and exemplified it all in His own life and character. We cannot imagine perfection better than this. So what we think of Him, we must think of God. He furnished not only a language for the discussion of God; He provided the substance of all true thought of God we have. As years ago Harris said in this connection:

"In Christ and His work of Redemption God makes the clearest and fullest revelation of Himself as the Trinity. We must begin with answering the

question, 'What think ye of Christ?' in order to answer intelligently what we think of God."*

IV

To make the mistake of thinking of the Trinity as a triad of deified human persons is very easy. Such a mistake would create God in our own image, likeness, and imperfection. The personality of angels is as different from ours as angelic nature is different from human. In a similar way personality in the Deity is different from that in humanity.

Almost every objection which has been made to the doctrine of the Trinity grows out of the unwarranted assumption that three persons in the Godhead mean just what three deified human persons would be. But three are all the persons in the Godhead there can be, while humanity is essentially the same with two as with sixteen hundred millions. One of an Unchangeable Three is not the same as one of an indefinite number. Personality is a thing of relations; and the immediate relations of it in a Trinity are essentially different from its immediate relations when a member of an indefinite number. The charge that Trinitarianism is three gods, is based on this misconception that divine personality is as one of an indefinite number, and that created human personality is a perfect model of the divine.

A friend passing a church in company with Daniel Webster said to him: "How can you reconcile the doctrine of the Trinity with reason?" He replied: "Do you understand the arithmetic of heaven?" There Webster touched the heart of the usual misconception that the Trinity of heaven is the same as a triad of earth or as a numerical fraction of the human race.

Personality in man is more or less a repetition of what it is in others of the race, occupying similar

**God the Creator and Lord of All*, Vol. I, p. 298.

place and using similar powers. Fathers there are over and over again, and sons innumerable becoming fathers themselves. How different this is where there is but One Father forever and an only begotten Son! Finite personality with a human body and power of propagating indefinitely, is very different from infinite personality wholly spiritual and in divine Trinity! So the meaning of personality in God transcends its meaning in man by as much as the Infinite and Uncreated transcend the finite and created.

V

In the Trinity the terms "Father" and "Son" mean far more and quite other than they do in human relations; otherwise they could not be used without the associate term of "mother." The relation between the Divine Father and the Eternal Son differs from that between an earthly father and son, for the former have co-existed in infinite relation forever. Though divine personality infinitely transcends human, it is still true personality, even as spirit is none the less such when infinite; and intelligence is none the less such when omniscient. While we are finite in personality, God is finality. He is the original in personality. We are derived from and patterned after the personality of the Son, not after that of the Father, nor after that of the Holy Spirit.

Not only is the Deity an Eternal Three, while the human race varies in number; there is also the difference that we are in process of personal development. We are becoming; while divine personality is eternal completion. Human personality may continue attaining forever, but with the divine there is eternal attainment to which nothing can ever be added for its completion. Created persons have unrealized moral possibilities. God's triune personality is fulfilled in Itself. Human personality is fulfilled in God.

Human personality in its moral and religious nature is progressively realized through moral choices and acts. This is sometimes called "emptying and becoming." By this is meant that choosing one moral line of action empties the possibility of the opposite, as two opposite moral directions cannot be travelled by the same person at the same time. The process of personal self-realization thus realizes one moral action or possibility, and automatically eliminates the realization of the opposite for the time being. How different in personality all this is from the changelessly constant character of God, "the same yesterday, today, and forever!"

VI

The Trinity is One God in Three Persons, one Divine Being in three inseparable *Other-Selves*. In personal function and distinction all of the Trinity is not in any One of the Three, yet each is perfect Deity and not a mere fraction thereof. In the divine Being there can be no fraction or separations.

All of God is not in the Father, as Servetus held, and Calvin condemned in a spirit more heterodox than the thought of Servetus. The Fatherhood of the Trinity would have no meaning if the Trinity were all such. The Father could not be Father to Himself. Fatherhood with no one as son, is as impossible and meaningless as a son without a father.

We should avoid thinking of the triune Godhead as a triad of facsimile repetitions, for each person of the Trinity is something in function and distinction that the other two are not. These distinctions are not superficial, but are from within. They are eternal and represent the three internal, complementary modes of the divine existence or the life of Deity within itself.

All that each of these three divine persons mean to each other in fellowship, fulfillment, and co-opera-

tive, complementary, inter-existence is known only to themselves. But much of what they are to each other comes out in the revelation of the Incarnate life of Christ. This was an outward manifestation of the inward. The indissoluble unity of the Trinity stood proof against the disruptive power of sin when tested by the effect on it in the sacrificial death of the Son. Yet this death mightily affected all the Godhead.

VII

The Father is *God over us* as Ultimate Source and Absolute Sovereign. The Son is *God for us* in Creation and Redemption. The Holy Spirit is *God within us* in Inhabitation and Impartation. The Father's Person is wholly unlimited by any immediate relation to created things. Because of this we know him only through mediation, or the manifestation He makes in the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is the Ultimate Transcendence.

The Son is the Mediating Person of the Trinity. He is by personal nature fitted to reveal, manifest, and act on behalf of the Father. As He said: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "For the Father hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father."

The Scriptures reveal the nature of the work of the Son and His part and place therein, rather than the nature of His person. In Him all creative and redemptive activities and relations center. "All things were made by Him." "He died for all." His Sonship is not only the foundation but also the means of the fulfillment of ours; and His redemptive sacrifice makes possible our sonship through the Holy Spirit by means of whose transmitting agency or activity we reach our fulfillment in the Son.

The Holy Spirit is "the proceeding person" of the Holy Trinity. By his constant going forth from the Father and the Son under their direction, He fills

His place as the active and imparting representative of both. By dwelling in us He is enabled to become the active source of our unity with God. Abiding with us He is the agent of enlightenment and empowerment. But He also communicates in Christ's intercessory function before the Father. Because of this He is the imparting or communicating agent of the Trinity in Redemption and so enabling us to receive that which the Father and the Son have for us. He bears His witness within the soul, also His witness in the Word, and His witness through believers to the world concerning the Son, and His work on behalf of man. "He shall bear witness of me. . . . He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak."

VIII

The term "Trinity" was first applied to the Godhead in the second century. Theophilus of Antioch then so used it. The term "person" was first employed by Tertullian to describe the members of the Trinity. Since that day the discussion of this doctrine has passed through many stages. It looks today as though it is destined to be discussed anew from many points of view.

Only two phases of the discussion may be mentioned here, the psychological and the redemptive. Modern psychology is of far more help in holding to the doctrine of the Trinity than the old, which made it difficult to keep from tri-theistic presentation of it, because the old psychology made self-consciousness the distinctive and central thing in personality.

We now realize that a self-conscious person is abnormal, for distinctive and central self-consciousness spells selfishness. Here we have to distinguish sharply between occasional consciousness of self and constant self-consciousness. Professor James Ward, with his subject-object explanation of consciousness,

exposed long ago the fallacy of making self-consciousness instead of consciousness basic in personality. It is amusing, if not pathetic, that Modernist objectors to the doctrine of the Trinity as tri-theism still base their objection on old discarded psychology. They are putting what they take to be new wine, in old torn wine-skins.

With consciousness instead of self-consciousness as fundamental in personality, we are able to see that unselfish nature is bound to be "other-conscious," not self-conscious. The Father is more conscious of the Son and of the Holy Spirit than of Himself. And so for the other-consciousness of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is not three separate self-consciousnesses but *One Other-Consciousness*. The more unselfish persons become, the more they forget themselves and the happier they are thereby. God in perfect personality has been eternally happy in triune other-consciousness. Three separate self-consciousnesses would have been three eternal miseries, three infinite agonies.

IX

Taking up for a moment the redemptive phase of the discussion as linked to the psychological, we find in the consciousness of the Christ the norm of that found in all saved human personality. His coming into the world has given us opportunity to study at close range the brother-consciousness of life eternal which was manifest in the mind of Christ.

The Redemption of Christ saves us to this normal consciousness as found in Him and in the Blessed Trinity. Through His mind in us we lose the self-consciousness of selfishness; and we are saved when we have the Christlike other-consciousness; others rather than self are then the objects of the consciousness of the love that "seeketh not its own." In this self-forgetfulness heaven is begun. Our misery al-

ways begins with the return of self-consciousness. Think of a true mother, not self-conscious but child-conscious. "Where our treasures are, there will our heart be also." Where our interests are, there will our consciousness be also. He that loses his self-consciousness in the consciousness of Christ, finds the consciousness of the everlasting joy similar to that of the triune God.

In all our further study of this great subject of Personality and Redemption we must ever turn to Him who is the only perfect person who has come within the range of human observation. He is at the same time the highest possibility of human nature realized, and the deepest possibility of divine revelation actualized. To use an obsolete word, He is the *devertex* of the divine and the apex of the human. As Son of God and Son of man He is the deepest down-reach of God and the utmost up-reach of man. As our Redeemer who died for us, and our Living Atonement who "ever liveth to make intercession for us," He is our Immanuel, still with us. He is God come to us with the revelation of His infinite sacrifice for our sakes. He is God come so near us, we can through His wounded side look into His very heart, behold it beating and bleeding for us, and feel the throb of its life-blood transfusing into our human consciousness the God-consciousness of life eternal.

"Under an Eastern Sky,
Amid a rabble's cry,
A Man¹ went forth to die
For me.

Thorn-crowned His blessed head,
Blood-stained His every tread;
Cross-laden on He sped
For me.

Pierced glow His hands and feet,
Three hours o'er Him beat
Fierce rays of noontide heat
For me.

Thus wert Thou made all mine;
Lord, make me wholly thine;
Grant grace and strength divine
To me.

In thought and word and deed
Thy will to do. Oh, lead
My soul, e'en though it bleed,
To Thee."

CHAPTER XIII

THE SON'S BRIDE

MOST story-books have the similar ending of a triumphant wedding and "happiness ever after." What is this but imagination's unconscious imitation of the Great God-given Story of the Book of books, with its triumphant ending of the Wedding Festival in the New Jerusalem when the Bridegroom, the Virgin's Son, brings home His Bride, the Church, for the celebration of all Heaven, and a million millenniums of happy hereafter!

In the New Testament the Church is often portrayed as the Bride-elect. But not long could the Bridegroom tarry on earth with her. "The days will come when the Bridegroom will be taken away." But He has left His Bride in the care of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity; and has promised to return "some sweet day, bye and bye," and to receive His Bride in the glorious rapture of the final triumph.

There is a well-worn adage that "When a man's married, his troubles begin." A good-natured pastor standing before two well known friends whom he had just married, said facetiously to them: "Now you're at the end of your troubles. I've not said which end."

As a rule it is better to joke over our troubles than to cry over them; but the trouble which the Bride of the Redeemer has brought to Him is far from any joking matter. All the agonies she has brought upon herself, are equally His because He loves her so. In addition, there are the troubles she has brought upon Him alone. This is a world in which true love has a hard time, and never runs smoothly in any relation.

I

The history of the Church is a story of trials and of triumphs. In this chapter we shall consider the former, and in the next and last, the latter. The long catalogue of the Church's misfortunes is due most of all to the weakness within her which has manifested itself in various ways. The Bridegroom before leaving to prepare a place for her, warned her that she might expect nothing but trouble and hatred from the world. Would to God the Church had remembered His warning!

"In the world ye have tribulation." "The world hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil one."

While from the world our Lord expects unrelenting opposition, from his Bride-elect He expects faithfulness during His absence and in the presence of the enemy. But she has brought trouble to herself and to Him through flirting with this enemy, receiving presents therefrom, often wearing the garments and ornaments the world has given her, and injuring her good name by frequent association and even carousal with this evil paramour.

During the first Christian centuries the Church was proof against all this, and during that time she kept pure, and was invincible. When the world found out that the Church was not to be conquered by war, it tried love with all too much success. From then on the enemy has continued to make love to the Lord's Bride, flattering her, fawning upon her, cajoling her with the blarney she loves to hear, with the result that she has gone after the god of a Good Time, and neglected her important mission. Hindered by catching the disease of worldiness she was sent to cure, and catching it because she ceased to offer the cure

in Christ, she lost her witness, her self-respect, and has but earned the world's contempt. She has not kept herself unspotted from the world.

No wonder the Bridegroom looks forward longingly to the time when His foolish Bride will have ceased to run after her false lover, will be undeceived, forgiven, purified, and brought back to dependable faithfulness.

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb." "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the laver of water with the word, that he might present to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

II

The second source of trouble to the Lord is the Church's changed regard for his Word. The world's professed love for the church is insincere, but not more than the Church's professed love of truth is misinformed and misdirected. Balking at the truth of the Word of Him who is the Truth, much of the Church today professes allegiance to academic or scientific truth. Not to this, however, but to spiritual truth does the Church owe her witness.

Natural knowledge and spiritual truth can never conflict, any more than their two realms can. Conflict there is though when the pledged witness to the one, which is the business of the Church, is replaced by volunteered witness to the other. Because the Church is composed of human beings, she may be interested in human pursuits, scholarly, scientific, and all the rest; but *her task is the Divine pursuit*, to make known the Truth of truths, Truth Incarnate, even Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

"I have given them Thy word." This is the

Divine laver to keep the Church clean from the defilement of error. Then a most serious thing for the Church is the attempt from within her to overturn and empty this laver. "Now are ye clean through the word that I have spoken unto you." Soul-defiling unbelief in this Word is a poor exchange for the soul-cleansing Word itself. The history of the Church shows that unbelief in the word of the Lord has always proved to be the disease-breeding filth which the enemy is ever seeking to bring into the Church. This results in the soldiers of the Cross becoming chronic patients in a hospital. "Typhoid carriers" are harmless compared with the promoters of unbelief mingling with the membership of the Church.

He who one day cleansed His Father's house, finds it far more difficult to cleanse the House of His Bride. She has not always proved a good housekeeper. Especially of late she has been somewhat too indifferent to the uncleanness being heaped up within her dwelling, and too lenient with those who claim the divine right to bring in this uncleanness of unbelief in the Word of her Bridegroom. This has befogged and tainted the atmosphere of the Church. Modernism talks of the need of purifying the Church, and all the while continues carrying in its defiling unbelief. It would purify the Church with more impurity. But the Church can never clean house with uncleanness. This homeopathy will not work. It can only make a bad matter worse, a serious state still more serious.

Never has anything, and never can anything, but discord, division, unhappiness, weakness, sleeping sickness, inefficiency, and withering come to the Church from renouncing faith in the Scriptures as the Word of God. Disagreeing within on this matter, there can never be any true agreement on any other matter. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Then what becomes of this faith

when the Word is not held worthy of it? As goes it with the Bible, so goes it with the Church herself. "Heaven and earth may pass away, but my word shall not pass away." The permanence of the Church on earth depends on her holding fast to this permanence of the Bible. To the end of time the Scriptures will remain the visible projection of the mind of the Lord. The consensus of the Christian centuries has so recognized it, and the Holy Spirit by blessing the proclamation of it, has attested to it as His inspired message. The Church may save herself from many further troubles by filling her place appointed of God as "the pillar and ground of the truth."

III

Another cause of trouble has been the misinterpretation which a portion of the Church publishes as to her place in relation to the mediation of salvation and who the Mediator is. The Word of God says, "There is but one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." "I am the door," said the Saviour. This portion of the Church says, "I am the door to the door; no man can enter except through me." So the mediation of salvation would thus be completely, exclusively monopolized by this branch of the Church. Instead of every member having direct, immediate access to God through Christ as the door, without any obstruction before it of priest or potentate, the door is padlocked, and the priest and potentate profess that they only have the key, and that there is no salvation outside this particular part of the Church.

Thus a finger of the Bride claims absolute control over Him as the entrance way to the Kingdom of God; and unless you pay this finger's fee, and submit to it entirely, you must stay outside "the pearly gates." Until of late there has arisen no more painful difficulty within the Church, no more irreconcilable difference

within it than over this matter. There can be in the nature of the case no compromise between the priesthood of the believer as set forth in the New Testament, and the exclusive priesthood that shuts the door of the Kingdom of God to all who prefer the way of salvation set forth in the Bible. Fire and water are as likely to agree as these two—the Roman Catholic position of salvation by faith in her ecclesiastical sacraments, the appointment of the Virgin Mary as Mediator, and the Protestant position of faith in Jesus Christ as personal Saviour and all-sufficient Mediator and Redeemer.

When exclusive spiritual prerogatives and the right to dominate and direct political governments, are successfully claimed, the union of Church and State is inevitable. Then the Kingdom of heaven is not only on earth but of it; and then Christ's Kingdom is of this world and his servants must fight—usually among themselves. Nearly fifteen hundred years of struggle and trouble has followed the attempt of this portion of the Church to dominate the rest and take to itself as its own all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them. And the trouble to the Bridegroom through all these weary centuries still goes on without any sign of ceasing or even abating. More than thirty governments have their representatives at the Vatican today.

IV

Another set of troubles has arisen from ignoring the necessity of the miraculous birth of the Bride. The Son of the Virgin was of miraculous birth. So must His Bride be. "He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." The Church must likewise be born of the Holy Spirit. The refusal to believe in the Virgin Birth is largely due to lack of the Spirit of regeneration. He who does not believe in the absolute necessity of this miracle of regeneration, does not quite understand the spiritual nature

of the Church. "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Those who enter the Church who have not entered the Kingdom, cannot fail to bring much trouble to the Church. An unregenerate Church is like a piano without strings. The substitutes for them sound strange.

If for no other reason a regenerate church membership is essential because of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through the Church. Only the Spirit-born are spiritually equipped in nature and discernment necessary to the vital relation which the Church bears to the Holy Spirit. Those in the Church not born from above cannot but resist the Spirit and fail to discern His place and power. So Paul puts it:

"For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace: because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be: and they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

The Church is the only organization on earth established to be an organism of the Spirit. Since only they who are born of the Spirit can be led of the Spirit, the very mission of the Church is foredoomed to be missed when unregenerate members make up her body. Since then efficiency, harmony, oneness of spiritual discernment, and empowerment for service depend upon being supernaturally born, trouble and disharmony, futility and failure is the lot of the portion of the Church in which the foundation-miracle of regeneration is not fully recognized.

V

The next source of trouble is the Church's misuse of liberty. A strong portion of the Church has never assented to the right of all to worship God according

to the freedom of the Spirit. Liberty seemed very precious in the days when it was denied those who wished to worship and serve God as the New Testament directs. Long and costly years passed in gaining this freedom. Even yet in some countries it is not won. The persecution of those who sought this God-given liberty is perhaps the saddest and bloodiest in the history of the Church.

In our own country where this liberty is, thank God, unrestricted, it is abused. But liberty not led of the Holy Spirit is the slavery of corruption. Instead of "standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free," many are entangled in the thorny thicket of false philosophy, or mired on the bog of false freedom. Much of Protestantism is pure "Do-as-you-please-ism." Religious liberty once a healthy body, has thus become a putrescent corpse. Many interpret God-given liberty as the liberty God gives to ignore God Himself.

Only as Christian liberty can be defined in terms of loyalty to Christ is it genuine. The liberty to be disloyal to Christ turns virtue into vice, the blessings of freedom into a curse. *The test of religious liberty is what it does with the liberty of Christ.* When it is not freedom to Him, it is not true freedom for us. If our liberty, instead of restraining and hindering Christ, gives Him liberty to use and bless us, then it is the liberty of loyalty and freedom indeed. The Church of Christ has brought great trouble to Him by going from one extreme to another, either denying liberty or turning it into license, either refusing or abusing it.

VI

One more means of trouble to Christ is the lack of divine worship on the part of many in the Church. This is the only marriage union where the worship of the Bridegroom is essential to the welfare of the

bride, and where the Bridegroom is worthy of worship. Here too the Bride has gone from one extreme to another, from worshipping the Virgin before the Son, to prostituting worship into entertainment.

It is but fair to say that the Roman Catholic position, that the worship of God is not a matter of convenience and entertainment, is correct. Protestantism through over-emphasis on preaching and under-emphasis on worship has damaged itself almost irretrievably. An audience, not a church; sermon-tasters, not worshippers, form the congregation. The idea of sacrifice in worship has largely gone out, and worship when it costs little or nothing, is thought all that is needed. Many do not sacrifice their personal ease and convenience for the public worship of God.

We very much need training in devoutness. We need a good substitute for external ecclesiastical compulsion to worship. There should be sufficient inward constraint that causes us to feel we must worship God; otherwise our religious services will continue to be feebly attended, and our worship as feebly offered. The love of Christ has ceased to constrain us, because our love to Him has ceased to train us.

Protestantism is largely an unworshipping religion. It has other virtues, but this is one terrible defect in it. Our people are trained to ignore rather than to observe worship; and those who do come to the house of God are there to enjoy singing or sermon; not to entertain God in devout worship, but to be themselves entertained by the minister and the choir. Many of the congregation pass through the whole service without a moment's attempt to commune with God. Did some folk commune with Him, it would be to ask God for praise that He has been so highly honored as to have them in His house. They condescend to patronize God and think that is worship! When company has not come, and there is nothing

more important or engaging at home, we go to worship with much the same attitude of mind and manner of conduct that we could go to the "movies." And our unworshipping church services lead to our unworshipping lives.

In this matter "judgment must begin at the house of God." There are poor pagan worshippers with all the handicap of heathenism who have developed far more sense of reverence, more devoutness and capacity for worship than many of our Church members. And in that great day when all will be judged according to capacity for God, these worshipping pagans will fare better than unworshipping, sub-pagan Protestants. Some one has facetiously said:

"The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone;
The Christian in his wisdom
Bows down to *gold* alone."

Hardly to gold alone, for many worship self or ease with no gold in either.

VII

The last if not the least of serious church troubles, (Would to God it were the last and least!) which is here enumerated is that of denominational division. In outward appearance, and in inward state here on earth the Bride of Christ is not as yet a unity. The vast number of denominations is still being added to. For almost any conceivable reason,—or none, a new sect starts. We have divided and re-divided and subdivided over every doctrine and practice in Christianity.

One cannot imagine any theological vagary, but some sect is devoting its existence to support it. Vagary to us is vigor to others. And we are always having trouble about the line fences, and have esteemed them as though the crops grew on them.

Confusion worse confounded, division worse divided, what is all this but denominational dementia?

In the presence of the great division today between Naturalists and Supernaturalists, one notable good has appeared. Seeing how utterly far apart those are within the same local church who have taken absolutely opposite stands about the old evangelical faith, sense of proportion has shown us how senseless have been most of the reasons for denominational separations. How comparatively unimportant now look the matters of dispute that once bulked so large in our thoughts!

The Loyalists and the Modernists today within the same church are far further apart than Roman Catholic and Protestant. Those still true to Christ and the faith that is in Him and His Holy Word, have been drawn together as never before in the midst of the storm and peril which has come upon us. *With us now the one important matter is whether Christianity is to remain Christian.* Then in essentials let us have unity; and for non-essentials no more divisions; and may there soon be an end to all separation that weakens us in the presence of the unsparing enemy.

Our disunity has been a source of most serious weakness, waste, and loss of efficiency. We have failed in witnessing to the Lord, as we ought; and succeeded in bringing trouble to Him, as we ought not. Our glut of schism and deluge of denominational divisions has cost us the one irresistible witness to the Deity and redemptive sufficiency of Jesus Christ; and an unbelieving world is our reward.

“Neither for these only do I make request, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one;

I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me."

"The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new Creation by water and the word.
From heav'n He came and sought her to be His holy Bride;
With His own blood He bought her, and for Her life He died.

Though with a scornful wonder men see her sore opprest,
By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distrest;
Yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, 'How long?'
And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.

'Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious, her longing eyes are blest
And the great Church victorious shall be the Church at rest."

CHAPTER XIV

THE BRIDE'S SONG

IF ALL that could be related were the sad story of the troubles which the Bride-elect has brought to her Bridegroom, it would seem that Christianity had failed. Thank God, there is another and brighter side! This is the tale of the triumphs of the Church. And these are as glorious as her trials have been grievous, for they are in spite of her weaknesses. Despite all her failures the Lord finds reason to rejoice over His Bride. The prophecy which Isaiah uttered about Zion might be predicted also about the Church: "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee."

There is a peculiar Old Testament passage which speaks of God singing: "He shall joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17). The Epistle to the Hebrews relates that the Son of God in bringing many sons to glory through the glory of His sacrificial death, is not ashamed to call them brethren, and represents Him as singing about this, using the words of the Messianic twenty-second Psalm: "In the midst of the church will I sing Thy praise." The Church herself has always been a society of singing saints. How well her psalms tell the story of both her griefs and her glories, her trials and triumphs of faith! Swans sing before they die. Faiths die when they cease to sing. The song of the Bride has had much to do with keeping her alive, hopeful, helpful, and strong. She has lessened her sorrows by her songs, and her joys have been heightened by her hymns.

Songs have been born for all sorts of occasions. There was Creation's anthem, "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted

for joy." And the angels sang a glorious strain on that first Christmas morn when the Creator was born a creature, and had a cattle-stall for a cradle. The Redemption which the Redeemer wrought out by His atoning death has occasioned more hymns of praise than all else put together. Here is a subject as new as it is old. "The old, old story of Jesus and His love." The Song of the Bride repeats it anew:

"Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood; and He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto God and His Father. To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Behold, He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. 1:5-7).

I

First of all, there is the Church's triumphant appreciation of the love of Christ Jesus our Lord. "*Unto Him that loveth us.*" This fittingly comes first in the Bride's song, for love is first in God and God's. From first to last, from East to West, from North to South, however scattered, however fettered, however foolish, however feeble, however failing elsewhere, the Church fails not to regard most highly the love from on High, which stooped to die for all the sons of men.

Well does the Bride of Christ know that it has not been her love for Him, but His love for her that has preserved her. Disappointed all elsewhere, weary and heart-sore, with tearful eyes blinded by the dust of earth the Bride turns her face up toward His; and her soul sings out itself in love's own sweet strain:

"O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul on Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

A home is natural love organized. A church is divine love organized. There too it is naturalized, at home in an organism of its own. Over the door of the Church might be written in love's radium from heaven, "Abandon hate who enters here!" Hate is as much out of place in a church as the devil would be in the resurrection tomb of the Risen Lord. The curse of hate is its incurable callousness to love's crucifixion by it. Because God has filled His universe with love, no one has begun to learn the lesson of how to love, till first of all he begins with appreciation of this Love Immeasurable, broader than breadth, deeper than depth, higher than height, "that passeth knowledge." All true love finds bliss in absorption of attention fixed upon the Lord's love for us; it is always bound to be unhappy in inspecting itself, and joyous in beholding Limitless Love as it is in God alone.

"Thy love to me, O Christ,
Thy love to me,
Not mine to thee, I plead,
Not mine to thee:
This is my comfort strong,
This is my only song,
Thy love to me."

God is love. The Church is the beloved—and conscious of it. Nothing but love can ever build the Church, and the absence of it tears down this habitation of heaven on earth. The Church is Christ's love-conscious creation. With her love-seeing soul she only has the vision of the future that is not visionary. If love is the greatest thing in the world, the Church is the greatest organization in the world, in proportion as she exists, functions, and lives for the love of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

There is but one God in triune unity of love. There is but one love worthy and great enough to consume universal attention. To know it is to be

forever freed from mistaking our human love for love in the fullest meaning. We are moving away from the very meaning of love while in the act of measuring our own. The highest love we can ever have is appreciation, appreciative love in response to the Highest Love. The school of love, the Church, has this lesson to learn, this capacity of love's appreciation of love to develop.

"Unto him that loveth us." God's love needed this infinite and eternal gift of the Son to express itself adequately. Never before had love its full meaning revealed on earth till God the Son died of a broken heart on the Cross of Calvary. God so loved the world that nothing in the unfathomable riches of His Being was withheld when He gave His only begotten Son to die as sin-bearer for the world. So the Church may well pray that this love may fill and inflame her heart, for thus has she ever triumphed, by prayerful appreciation of this love.

"Jesus! Thy boundless love to me
No thought can reach, no tongue declare;
O knit my thankful heart to Thee,
And reign without a rival there:
Thine wholly, Thine alone I am;
Lord, with Thy love my heart inflame."

II

The next triumph mentioned in the Song of the Bride is that of faith in the purifying and liberating power of her Redeemer-Bridegroom. "*And loosed (or washed) us from our sins.*" Believing in being freed from the slavery of sin is not enough. We need faith in the emancipating power of the Redeemer to bring this to pass. Faith in purity is first; then faith in the power able to purify comes naturally with it. The Church believes in the liberating power and cleansing purity of Jesus Christ. Stained by her sin she sings, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than

snow." Sick of sin's bitter bondage, tired of the accursed load of its defilement and guilt,

"I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load.
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White in His blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains."

Sin is many things—in fact everything—in contradiction to the moral nature of God. It is the opposite to His freedom and to His purity. Iniquity is the worst of all slavery, the worst of all impurity. "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." He is the purity of liberty in fellowship with Truth Personified, full of cleansing grace.

"Vile and full of sin I am;
Thou art full of truth and grace."

The Son of God was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Of Him only of all who have trodden this earth can it in truth be said, "He was without sin," "Who did no sin." But the best thing about His spotless purity was its power of impartation, of making clean the souls defiled by sin. In order to attain this power He had to pay the price of His sacrificial death. This was the enablement of Atonement. By His death He became death to sin's enslavement. The power of His sacrifice overcame the enthralling power of iniquity. The cleansing virtue of his sacrifice was greater than the defiling demerit of sin's selfishness.

The greatest triumph is over the greatest enemy. The deepest delivery is from the depths of most degrading bondage. The most valuable purity is in the most valuable thing. So the most triumphant faith is that which lays hold on the Redeemer whose divine

power overcomes the soul's greatest enemy and vilest slavery, and whose grace cleanses with the purity of its sacrifice from the impurity of iniquity that most valuable thing—the human soul. This faith in Christ's ability to blot out sin and deliver the soul from its servitude has triumphed down through all the Christian centuries. It is the overcoming faith which makes these who have it "more than conquerors." The sense of her need of Christ to do all these great things for her, the Church has never lost.

"I need Thee, precious Jesus,
For I am full of sin;
My soul is dark and guilty;
My heart is dead within:
I need the cleansing fountain
Where I can always flee,
The blood of Christ most precious,
The sinner's perfect plea."

III

The third triumph of the Church is in her continued appreciation of the Cross, her victory over sin through the blood of Christ. "*And hath loosed us from our sins by His Blood.*" "These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "And they overcame him (the Accuser) because of the blood of the Lamb." "The church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood."

There is an over-refinement which dislikes any mention of the blood of Atonement. Perhaps such fastidious taste prefers salvation by the glands of evolution. One wonders why this extreme delicacy of refined feeling which counts blood so coarse and grewsome a thing, still keeps its heart, arteries, and veins full of blood. Why not instead have them filled with distilled ice-water?

As a matter of fact there is nothing in all the

physical realm so sacrificial, so holy, so like God Himself as blood. Every drop of human blood has in it some five million corpuscles always busy in a sacrificial existence for our sakes. We live by the constant service of these vast numbers of living sacrifices. "The blood is the life." It is essentially a sacrificial life-service, very like the life of God Himself.

Blood is therefore the most apt figure to portray what Christ is to the Church. Some profess to turn a wafer into God; they materialize the spiritual. God's way is to spiritualize the material; thus blood is spiritually discerned. The price of the Church's existence Christ pays in His own blood. And its preservation costs him as much. Moreover, the sacrificial spirit of the Son is imparted to the Church. His spirit is the life-blood of this body; or, putting this in another way, His imparted life is the blood of the Church. By the transfusion of His precious blood into the veins of the soul we are saved from the sin of separation from God and from each other, whose blood we all have, we share His life in fellowship with Him and with one another.

Men may make an organization; only God can create an organism. The true, triumphant Church is an organism animated by this divine blood. Born of the Holy Spirit each member has this imparted life of God in him, the blood of everlasting life coursing through the veins and arteries of his soul. Unregenerate members are like clots in the arteries of the Church, and may cause spiritual paralysis, if not death.

The services of the blood are many. It kills disease germs, carries away worn out particles, and delivers the new elements of food where they are needed in repair, healing, growth, and health. It bears the oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the body that warmth and even temperature may be provided. To all of this service interesting parallel

in the ministry of the life-blood of Christ to the Church might be traced, had we time.

The body ecclesiastic may have evangelistic fevers or missionary chills. Some members function like varicose veins. Others by constricted interest restrict the circulation of the life-blood in them as members, with the result that strength ends and withering begins. The body itself holds together only as long as the blood service continues. Disintegration in the Church follows when the life of Christ is refused, or when His blood stagnates. As the blood-bond is the secret of Church unity, victory over the enemy within as without is by the blood. Power to triumph over sin in whatever form it appears or wherever it attacks the Church, comes by the full flow of the divine blood throughout the whole body. Then the Church is a crusade and not an excursion. "There's power in the blood," victory-power in the blood of the Bridegroom.

"Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more."

IV

"And He made us to be a kingdom." This is the triumph of peace and order Christ gives to His Bride through His rule. "There is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked." Even if God would offer armistice to him, the sinner would break it before it had well begun. Sin is war with God. There can be no order or peace till iniquity is put away and replaced by the harmony of the rule of God. And this can come only through the Redeemer's blood, the overcoming power of His sacrifice applied to the soul to cure its disharmony and disquiet.

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin;
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within."

The Kingdom of God represented however imperfectly in the Church is the only real peace agency on earth. Peace with God is the only foundation of peace elsewhere. Christ did not come to bring peace to this world in its sin, but the war of redemption that men might be delivered from peace-destroying sin. Wars on earth but reflect the condition of men's hearts in their relation to God. "The way of peace have they not known." For this reason war will continue as long as man rebels against the rule of God. God is as essential to political or international peace as to salvation. Peace plans that dispense with God offer "peace when there is no peace." Some one has lately said that "the war to end war failed, but the peace to end peace is succeeding." Thus must it ever be without the peace-power of the Cross of Christ.

When the Church is expected to abolish war in a world of sin, she is offered an impossible task. It is man-imposed, not divinely directed. God does not expect of her what He cannot do Himself. But she can continue to be peace-loving and peace-making. This comes through herself possessing "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and as she preaches "the gospel of peace," "the peace of God will rule" in her own heart, for all her peace-making triumph must be through bringing in the rule of her Bridegroom, the Prince of peace. As is often quoted from Milton:

"Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war."

V

"To be priests unto His God and Father." This is the Church's ministry of sacrifice. As sacrifice is the greatest triumph of the love of God, so her ministry of sacrificial love is the Church's greatest triumph. Sacrifice is the quintessence, the highest form of

righteousness. The sacrificial spirit of the Creator-Redeemer creates the Church in the image and likeness of her Redeemer. In this she bears the manifestation marks of the Master.

The main line of the Church's sacrificial endeavor will be considered in the next section. Here we may think of the sacrificial relation which the Church bears to the lesser needs of man, and the humanity in which her sacrificial spirit ministers to them. This is usually known as "social service." "Sacrificial service" would be better.

There are two extreme positions about this: Absorption in it, so that all that is attempted is to make the unsaved a bit more comfortable on their way to perdition; or oblivious to it, so that spiritual peace is offered to hungry stomachs and cold bodies. "Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body." Neither of these extremes represents the full humanity in the spirit of Christ.

In the world the Christ-likeness of the Church is bound to be known through the social by-product of her sacrificial spirit. We are living in a day of over-emphasis on social service, not that too much is being attempted; rather the reverse. This over-emphasis comes from under-estimate of men's spiritual need, and failure to recognize that sin lies at the bottom of all our social problems. As well try to mop up the sea as to banish the flood of evil social conditions without redemption from sin.

When one begins to sum up the humanitarian blessings which the spirit of Christianity has brought into being, hospitals, schools, benevolent institutions, he must acclaim this triumph of the Church. When Innocent IV said to those counting the Church's income, "The Church can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" Thomas Aquinas replied, "Neither can she say to the lame, 'Rise up, and

walk.'” Today the Church of Christ is investing money in orthopedic and similar healing institutions, and can say to the lame, in the healing name of the Great Physician, “Rise up, and walk.” But it is He who heals and not we; for we all need His healing.

“The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch Him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again.”

VI

“To Him be the glory of the dominion forever and ever.” The sacrificial spirit of evangelism, including missions, answers its own prayer for glory and dominion, to Christ. As we are priests unto God most truly when we minister to the highest needs of men, so we bring Christ the most glory and most enlarge His realm by winning men to and building them up in Him. The highest social service is spiritual. Christ fed men's bodies; first, because they needed food first, but most because He might in that way reveal Himself to them as the bread of life.

The triumph of the Church in this respect has two means: “They overcame him (the enemy) because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death.” This testimonial proclamation of the Gospel unto all the world, recognizes that man has but one need, redemption from sin. The Church is the only institution on earth dedicated to this glory of existing solely for the sacrificial purpose of Christ to save the world.

In proportion as the Church devotes itself to the world-wide program of Christ, it glorifies Him and gives Him greater dominion. The night before Canada received its name at the time when the confederation of all the provinces took place a devout member of parliament reading the seventy-second Psalm

was struck by an expression in the eighth verse: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." The next day his proposal that the country be known as "The Dominion of Canada" was adopted.

The Dominion of the Son of David "shall have no frontiers." The business of the Church of God is to see to it that the infinite sacrifice of the heart of God in Jesus Christ our Lord be not obstructed in reaching its goal, that every one on earth should know of it.

"That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

"Christ for the world, we sing;
The world to Christ we bring,
With loving zeal;
The poor and them that mourn,
The faint and overborne,
Sin-sick and sorrow-worn,
Whom Christ doth heal."

VII

"Behold, He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they that pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him. Even so, Amen."

"Every eye shall now behold Him,
Robed in dreadful majesty!
Those who set at naught and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing
Shall the true Messiah see."

This is the seventh triumph of the Bride. It is the triumph of "that blessed hope" of our Lord's Return. One recalls the famous artistic representation of Hope blindfolded and with the strings of her harp all gone but one, as this she plays seated on the

earth. The Church's harp of hope has all its heavenly strings unbroken still; and her hope that the Bridegroom will come again, is in no wise a blindfolded one. She beholds His sure promise in the Word which, though heaven and earth may pass away, shall not pass away. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . . Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. But according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

This completing triumph of Christianity is yet to come. Great as has been its achievements so far, far more was purchased by the immeasurable sacrifice of Christ than has yet appeared in response and return thereto. While it is folly for us with pressing duties before us to waste our time fashioning programs as to how all this ultimate triumph will be wrought out after the Second Coming, let us not for a moment doubt that it will take place, ushered in by The Great Return.

"The whole creation groans and waits to hear that voice
That shall restore her comeliness, and make her wastes rejoice.
Come, Lord, and wipe away the curse, the sin, the stain;
And make this blighted world of ours Thine own fair world again.
Come, then, Lord Jesus, come!"

Here then is our most optimistic hope raised to infinity. Here is an unshaken confidence that will not be ashamed on that Great Day. What a triumphant thing it is that this hope which Christ planted in the hearts of His followers has not died down through all the trying years.

"Saint after saint on earth has lived, and loved, and died;
And as they left us one by one, we laid them side by side;
We laid them down to sleep, but not in hope forlorn;
We laid them but to ripen there until the glorious morn.
Come, then, Lord Jesus, come!"

Some still say, "Where is the promise of His coming? for from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Yet today more are holding fast this eager expectation than ever before. "Maranatha!" "The Lord will come," is still the great watchword of Christian hope.

Phillips Brooks, in a mighty sermon on "The Great Expectation," says, "The power of any life lies in its expectancy." What mighty power this supreme expectation has added to Christian lives! And how much less fellowship with Him who is "The Coming One," must lives have that do not regard His Return as imminent, do not watch for it, and cannot join with the Bride in prayer for His coming quickly, but instead postpone it indefinitely—for at least more than a thousand years! "Behold, I come quickly . . . I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. . . . And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And he that heareth, let him say, Come! . . . He who testifieth these things saith, Yea, I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus!"

"Come, Lord, and tarry not; bring the long looked-for day;
O why these years of waiting here, these ages of delay?
Come for thy saints still wait: daily ascend their sigh;
The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! dost thou not hear the cry?

Come, for creation groans, impatient of Thy stay,
Worn out with these long years of ill, these ages of delay.
Come and make all things new; build up this ruined earth,
Restore our faded Paradise, Creation's second birth.

Come, and begin thy reign of everlasting peace;
Come, take the Kingdom to thyself, Great King of Righteousness."

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